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[A BROKEN LIFE.]

## VINCENT LUTTREL;

OR,

### FRIENDSHIP BETRAYED.

By the Author of "Fighting for Freedom," etc., etc.

#### CHAPTER V.

Thus lived, thus died she. Nevermore on her  
Shall sorrow light, or shame. She was not made  
Through years or moons the inner wright to bear,  
Which colder hearts endure till they are laid  
By age in earth. — Byron.

Thus far the fiendish schemes of Vincent Luttrell had progressed triumphantly. His crowning villany, however, was as yet in embryo, but destined in its development to grow into a crime of such hideous deformity that the foulest imp of Pandemonium might scorn to father it.

The next day, by a skillfully exaggerated description of the unreasoning vehemence of her husband's jealousy, and many plausible urgings of the absolute necessity of delay to soothe down his irritability, and gather evidence for her exoneration, Vincent Luttrell obtained from Mrs. Denton, who already felt the almost irresistible fascination of his voice and manner, which were aided by his perfect self-possession, and a sang-froid that never betrayed the inner workings of his mind, a paper in which she, while admitting her foolish levity of deportment, in the most solemn manner asserted her innocence. Then, the document proceeded, after acknowledging the invaluable services of Mr. Luttrell as mediator, to accept on her part an alimony of seven hundred and fifty pounds a year, to be paid by the hands of Mr. Luttrell, and on the condition that she, Isabel Denton, should live in retirement, and separated from her husband, until such time as her innocence, and the falsehood of the slander raised against her in the

matter of Captain Fitzgerald, should be made manifest.

This, Vincent Luttrell pretended to her, must take some six or eight months to effect, while to Hugh Denton he represented that his wife had no affection for any one but herself; that she had readily accepted his offer of a separate maintenance, and that he could shortly overcome her scruples and induce her to resign the care of their infant daughter. All this the unhappy, hypochondriac husband implicitly believed; or if he now and then felt some misgivings as to the amount of trust he was reposing in his zealous friend his indolence and fear of the dominating spirit of Vincent Luttrell checked him, and he absolutely allowed his self-constituted trustee to invest in a life annuity for Isabel Denton, with reversion to her infant daughter, the necessary stock; the dividends being payable to the order of Vincent Luttrell.

Thus armed (the scoundrel-friend, having in a moment of well-acted confidential friendship, made Mrs. Denton exactly acquainted with his position and powers, he accompanied her by the night-mail to a charming spot, far beyond the then stretch of railways, in the vicinity of Lostwithiel. There, on the banks of the Towey, they found a delightful residence, near the fine old ruins of Restormel Castle, replete with every convenience and many luxuries.

Mr. Vincent Luttrell, having previously informed such persons as he knew would circulate it in the little town that the coming lady, whom he called Mrs. Linton, was the wife of an officer on service in India, and that he, Mr. Digby, of Austenfrith, London, was her trustee and nearest relative, his appearance in church with her and her infant son on the succeeding Sunday was hailed as a gratifying event, and all the "gentility" of the neighbourhood vied for the privilege of an introduction to Mrs. Linton, who certainly acted her part of a lady seeking retirement with admirable tact. Nor did these unsophisticated Cornishmen suspect the slightest impropriety in the frequent and prolonged visits of Mr. Digby to his

cousin and ward; and their lengthened moonlight rambles by the river or the ruins. Did not Mr. Digby order everything for Maybank, as the lady's residence was named; and did he not pay all the bills, and never take off discount for ready money, said the tradesmen; and was he not always talking about expecting "the Captain" who might be by that time colonel, home on leave?

Thus things went on for four or five months, when a visible change came over the mistress of Maybank. Mr. Digby stayed longer away, "detained by business in London." Mrs. Linton became almost a recluse, and when she did venture abroad, all altered from the fashionable belle, the envy of the women and the admiration of the men of the little community. Her eyes were evidently swollen and red with weeping; her figure had lost its grace, her step its elasticity; her face, without bloom, natural or artificial, wore an expression of anguish; her look, downcast, and her eye avoiding the inquiring gaze even of those who spoke sympathizingly to her. To all, there was one story; severe illness was the explanation; yet the local surgeon-potheary was not called in. A London physician who was resident in Bodmin, recommended by Mr. Digby, attended the lady. Indeed, the gossips of Lostwithiel were sadly nonplussed. Hester, Mrs. Linton's maid, had been engaged from London, and was new to her service; Biddy, the cook, was a Cornishwoman, hired from the town; while Miss Warren, Mrs. Linton's cadaverous companion, had never been known to be absent one hour from her mistress's presence, and had never exchanged four words with anybody in the place. Hester, however, and the cook, did not hesitate to say that they had heard high words say, and very strange language, too, between their mistress, and her handsome young cousin, or master, or whatever he called himself.

They also reported that more than once Mrs. Linton had had a fit and swooned, and that when she came to she had talked strangely about being betrayed and destroying herself, and fiends and demons, and all sorts of things. But then, she always explained

these sayings by complaining of her weak head, and that she was subject to delusions under these attacks.

During one of these paroxysms Mr. Digby had brought over Doctor Robson, and upon his certificate, endorsed by a neighbouring magistrate, the solicitor Mr. Digby made his appearance after nightfall on the following day, with a strange gentleman, and removed the little girl to the care of a lady in Leamington. The unhappy mother was told that when her state of mind should make it prudent she would be allowed freedom to see her child, but she never seemed to avail herself of the privilege. From this time the poor lady's nervous attacks were more and more frequent and prolonged.

Four weeks had elapsed and no tidings of Mr. Digby. Poor Mrs. Linton became a perfect invalid, and was not seen abroad. The physician from Bodmin drove over thrice, or even four times a week, and Warren, having caught the Cornish cookmaid listening outside the door when, as the woman said, "the poor missus was in one of her tantrums," she was instantly discharged. The household was thus reduced to the London servant, the reticent Warren, and the gardener, a deaf old Cornishman, who "daint' know nuthen o' nobody's affairs 'cept his own, and they wasn't o' much concern to people as'd gie him nuthen for telling of 'em."

Thus, except the fact of poor Mrs. Linton waiting to a shadow, and a suspicion "that the 'lowance from Ingey hadn't come, and mayhap the Christmas bills wouldn't be paid," which occasioned a rude message or two from certain suspicious tradespeople, and threatened a suspension of credit at Maybank, nothing had happened during the four weeks that Mr. Digby had been away to interrupt the monotony of existence at the villa.

At the end of that period that mysterious gentleman arrived at the Crown Hotel accompanied by a London lawyer, and the physician from Bodmin. Close and long was the conference between the three gentlemen, and Doctor Robson, the physician, alone went on to Maybank; the other two gentlemen declaring themselves too tired for further travel, and allowing the lateness of the hour as precluding all ideas of intruding on the invalid at that time of the night.

Next morning the little world of Leamington was agitated by the most dismal rumour. Doctor Robson had returned at early morning from Maybank bringing the sad tidings that Mrs. Linton was no more. To this was soon added the dreadful fact that her death was occasioned by a arsenic poison, self-administered, and that an inquiry by the borough coroner would most certainly be instituted. Then came the opening of budget of scandals which were more than nine days wonder in that humdrum place of respectable existence.

A jury was empanelled, on the first fact deposed to by the sad-faced Miss Warren, that her deceased mistress Isabel Denton, passing by the name of Mrs. Linton, was the repudiated wife of Mr. Hugh Denton, of Rosemead, Devon.

That her troubles and the dread of a threatened divorce suit, had impaired her mental faculties. That she had twice lately attempted suicide and been prevented; once by drowning, the attempt being frustrated by Mr. Luttrell, her guardian and trustee—whose change of name passed totally without notice by the intelligent Cornish jury—the other by throwing herself from a window, that being hindered by the witness. Deceased was in the habit of taking opium, in the solid form, for neuralgia and lately took large and dangerous quantities of laudanum.

On the evening of her death she was in a state of delirium from opium and towards midnight, just before the arrival of the physician, she possessed herself of a phial containing laudanum, and, before witness could interpose, she had swallowed the contents, and, with an exclamation that her troubles were now ended fell upon the bed, where she was soon afterwards seen by Dr. Robson, who declared life to be extinct.

Dr. Robson followed, corroborating the facts deposed to by Miss Warren, and the coroner, having complimented Miss Warren upon the manner in which she had given her evidence, the jury declared that they were ready to give a verdict without, as the foreman said, "troubling the other gentlemen." To this the coroner assented, and asked if they all had agreed, to which they replied in the affirmative, without saying what they were agreed upon. Hereupon the coroner at once wrote down these words, "And this jury is of opinion that the deceased died of an overdose of laudanum, administered by herself, she being at the time of unsound mind."

The formal order for the interment of the remains of the unhappy woman was then made out, and the "worthy coroner" returned to the hotel with Vincent Luttrell and Doctor Robson.

Here, over an excellent dinner, washed down by some tawny port of the comet vintage, it seemed, if one might judge by the miscellaneous topics and cheerful conversation, all memory was effaced of the

hapless woman whose clay-cold remains lay alone and unwatched in the chamber of death.

We say alone and unwatched, for no sooner had the verdict of the "coroner's quest" been delivered than Miss Warren, who had previously been settled with Vincent Luttrell, with a doucet of fifty pounds, and who knew that she might, and "no questions asked," possess herself of such portions of her late mistress's wardrobe, and the less valuable of her jewellery as she pleased, busied herself in making up what Hester called "such a sight o' bundles and packages as took a cart and horse to move 'em to Bodmin."

Hester, however, had not much cause to cavil. She, in addition to a ten-pound note, had more baggage to declare at the station than ever she had before travelled with, and as both maid-servant and "companion" left that night, the only persons in charge were the deaf old gardener and his wife, up from the cottage, and Mr. Mute, the undertaker's foreman.

The funeral was indeed one of "magnificence." Four smock-frocked peasants were bearers, with a pall-covered coffin, followed by the undertaker and his men.

The doctor's carriage from Bodmin, containing the doctor himself, the London lawyer, whom nobody knew, and Mr. Digby, whom nobody recognized as the Mr. Luttrell of Miss Warren's evidence, as chief mourner, formed the procession, its principal feature being its queue. This consisted of about twenty women, the men, and thirty little boys and girls, the majority of the population of the village. Thus were borne the remains of the unhappy suicide straight into the churchyard, without the corpse being permitted to enter within the sacred edifice. The bearers carried the coffin to the grave-side and the sexton and assistants lowered it into its last resting-place with ropes. The clay was shovelled in without delay, and as soon as this operation was well in progress, one of the three gentlemen, who were watching these proceedings from the carriage window, as the vehicle stood outside the churchwarden's hall, called out to the coachman:

"Drive to the 'Crown Hotel' and Leamington, and put up the horsestallers. You'll stay lunch, doctor, won't you?"

The man of medicine declared himself "in Mr. Luttrell's hands," and the horsestallers turned round and went by the way it came.

There, in a nameless grave, beneath a long, low mound, rest the mortal remains of one, the deep damnation of whose taking off "was never questioned here, but shall assuredly be judged hereafter."

Three days from that time Vincent Luttrell called on the lady with whom little Isabel had been placed. From her house he conveyed her to her father, who was compelled to accept Vincent Luttrell's version of the circumstances as we have narrated in this chapter.

Hugh Denton's depression of spirits for a time increased, despite the comfort of the society and prattle of his beloved child. Horrible imaginings of death by poison, in which he could not help mixing up his tyrant, Vincent Luttrell, as an accomplice, if not the principal, tormented him.

What form the persecutions of his and his wife's destroyer next took was revealed in our first chapter, to which point of our story we have now returned.

## CHAPTER VI.

"There is an ancient proverb more plain than polite that what is got over the back of the elderly gentleman who rules in a certain place, said to be paved with 'good intentions' is generally spent under his belly. The curious may read this proverb in old John Ray, in its Latin, French, and Italian terms, for this sacred of popular wisdom pervades all nations."

Vincent Luttrell soon experienced the universality of its truth.

Among his passions—we have seen the havoc produced by some of them—was that of gaming. It was a pursuit for which some of his qualities of head and heart seemed especially adapted. Relentless, hard, cynical, selfish and pitiless in the woes of others, cool in peril, calculating even in the extremity of danger, with a smile on the mask which served him for a face, so enigmatical that pain and pleasure, gratification and disappointment, triumph and despair, might be alike read by different persons from his disingenuous features, Vincent Luttrell seemed the bean ideal of a gamester. Yet he was not fortunate.

We never, in a large experience, knew above three or four well authenticated instances of any man being so.

In a small way a fortunate gambler is simply a ruined man; bankrupt in character, in truth, in honesty, in self-respect, a man to whom reckless expenditure is his very life and being—a necessity rather than a luxury, a destiny rather than a choice, and who is consequently a ruined man.

Or he may be, and we have seen it, so opposite are human idiosyncrasies, a mean, greedy, avaricious, money-grubber, whose assured thirst of gold has made him, for extremes meet, a gambler. Such a wretch has not the dash, the plunge, the recklessness to make what the slang calls "a good winner," and is for ever losing the chance his cupidity craves for.

An extensive observation of the fortunes and far more frequently the misfortunes of these half-hearted gamblers, to whom "ready made luck" is a necessity, warrants the conclusion that they too are, in the great majority of cases, ruined men, and it is well they should be so.

To return to our hero.

Vincent Luttrell, though not personally extravagant, nor constitutionally generous, never knew the value of money, and therefore never kept it—hence he was always, while living like a gentleman, in present need of cash.

Knowing that his now almost imbecile victim, for whom he began to feel something akin to contempt rather than pity, would not dare to call him to account, he dipped his hand into the dividends which should have been paid over to the unhappy Mrs. Denton, but shortly after her dreadful end he had gone beyond this and, unknown to Hugh Denton, reduced the principal of the trust fund to the amount of one-third the original sum of fifteen thousand pounds, and, in a London office, at five per cent. interest, to secure seven hundred and fifty pounds as provision for Mrs. Denton, stood in his name. Of this he had fraudulently drawn five thousand pounds to meet some pressing exigencies, but had, up to the time of which we are writing, contrived to pay to Hugh Denton, attorney, the entire sum of seven hundred and fifty pounds per annum. Of late these gentlemen, as men of business, had pressed Vincent Luttrell to accept a release from his now useless trusteeship in order that a transfer of the fund, created for a special purpose, might revert to its owner, the client.

Talk was, as Luttrell called it, "an ugly fir," so he listened with them until they wrote rather strongly, and finally extorted from Hugh Denton a loan of five thousand pounds at five per cent. He then informed the lawyers that the trust fund was fifteen thousand pounds less that sum, the release was executed, the capital redeemed, and Mr. Vincent Luttrell went forth an honourable trustee, and of course forgot to pay one shiver of interest to Hugh Denton from that day forward.

Vincent Luttrell's London career, however, was drawing to a close.

An intriguer with one female intrigante, for there is always a female who goes beyond the cleverest man in wicked cunning, had involved our heartless Lothario in an expenditure utterly beyond his means. True, he detested and despised himself for the way in which this Circe had enchanted him and almost imbruted him, as though he had been the variegated greenhorn simpleton whom the world laughs at as the infatuated dupe of a courtesan. Yet it was so; there was the fact, and Vincent Luttrell, the blasé man of the world, the cynic, the disbeliever in honesty or woman's virtue, was legally, as well as in honour, liable for the extravagance of a demigay into whose coils he had fallen, while he, actually, prided himself in certain disreputable circles on having the Lais of the day "under his protection."

At the same time, for

"When sorrows come, 'tis not in single spies,

Vincent Luttrell had the bad luck to lose heavily on the Derby; so heavily that he could not show at "the Corner" on the settling day.

Then the principal creditor of Lais had had. Vincent Luttrell's name, and what was worse, his promise, that he would see him, paid for a park phaeton and a pony carriage ordered by that lady. He was wondering at his egregious folly, when a sheriff's officer served him with a writ from a Mayfair job-master, who, hearing of her difficulties, made a claim for the price of a pair of carriage horses at a fabulous figure, and a further charge of two hundred guineas for "a screw," which he desired Mr. Luttrell to fetch away, as it had been "broken down by jacking," as he said, at a suburban steppelane.

"Egad," said Vincent Luttrell, as he despatched his chocolate and milk in the apartment in Half Moon street, and surveyed all the letters and envelopes we have alluded to, "it is getting very warm for so early in the season," and he rang the bell.

"James, I am not at home to any one. You can say that you know I have gone down into the square."



to see my uncle, who's very ill, and from whom I've great expectations, or anything else you like. And don't forget, James, for I'm really going out of town for a day or two, to collect my letters in one large envelope, which I'll leave for you, stamped, and forward them by the first post after I send you my address, which I will do as soon as I have reached my destination—

"Rat, let, let, let, let! Who the deuce is that? Run, James; that fool of a servant will let them in, and—"

James did run, but not fast enough; the visitors were two rough looking men, who pushed by the girl and walked straight up to the stairs. James knew the first one, and tried for a moment to obstruct the way.

"Master's gone in the country to his uncle, and he left word—"

"That you're to deny him to such visitors as us, werry good, Mr. James, but that cook won't fight. We marked Mister Luttrell down last night, and I'm sure we've done the polite thing to give him time to sleep it off and get his breakfast and so forth before we intrude ourselves. Come, get inside, Mister James, it ain't no use, our bird has not left his roosting-place this morning, I'll pound it. Why, there he is—good morning, sir; I want to speak to you—a little private business, sir."

Vincent Luttrell, hearing the altercation, did not choose to lose his dignity, so he cut short the affair by presenting himself at the drawing-room door.

"I'll see this gentleman, James."

"There you are," said the bailiff, as he passed the servant, "I told you it was business—servant, sir." Mr. Mainprize bowed himself into the room and closed the door behind him, leaving his follower outside, who retreated downstairs to the passage.

"Here's the copy, sir." Would you like to see the 'original'?"

Mr. Luttrell expressed himself entirely satisfied with the copy, whereupon Mr. Mainprize handed him a billous, blue-looking slip of printed paper with MS. filigree up, in which "Victoria" greeted informed Vincent Luttrell that she required his attendance in her Court of Exchequer of Pleas, to answer the plaint in the action of debt of Goodman Levy, the particulars whereof are endorsed on this writ; it further informed him, on the authority of Baron Alderson, (whose signature was legally put to the same) that he must enter an appearance to the said plaint within eight days, otherwise the said plaintiff might enter an appearance for him and sign judgment as for the want of a plea.

Now, as Vincent Luttrell had made up his mind not to appear, and, what is more, not to enter appearance within eight days, on any other period, to Mr. Goodman Levy's writ, he turned to the back of the document with the utmost nonchalance, and there read that "the plaintiff claims the sum of two thousand five hundred pounds three shillings and two pence halfpenny, together with 2l. 2s. the cost of the writ, and the further sum of 3l. 15s., which if you pay by Monday next, at 12 o'clock, further proceedings therein will be stayed."

"Very good, mister, very good—I accept service. Will you take a glass of sherry, or would you prefer spirits?"

"A drop of brandy, sir, if it's in the way."

The brandy was at hand, and quickly disappeared down Mr. Mainprize's throat.

"Unpleasant business this, my fine fellow. Do you ever see this gentleman, the plaintiff—I mean, Mr. Goodman Levy?"

"Often and often, sir, mostly every day when he's in town."

"Then tell him that I shall settle with him on my return from a little trip I'm about to take; and that he'd better save his money by stopping Messrs. Kite, Hawk, and Buzzard, as he won't get any costs in this quarter."

"Ha! ha! you're pleasant, sir, this mornin'; my business is done, sir, so thank 'ee for me," and Mr. Mainprize bowed himself and his middy boots out of the room.

"The weather's getting thicker, and won't get clearer for awhile," mused Luttrell; "I don't know where to get even a cool hundred, since I've been such a confounded idiot as to let Denton's lawyers' blow me out of the trusteeship. I might, at a pinch, have helped myself there. By-the-by, Denton's my only resource after all. Hum! ha! it's not a bad idea, if well worked out. Hugh Denton has lately inherited yet another fortune; how lucky these idiots are!"

"Call me not fool," says Jacques, "till Heaven has sent me better fortune." Yes that's the true philosophy.

But should the idiots enjoy their good fortune, while clever men pine in poverty, and perish for the want of what the idiots gain without deserving? The clever deserve to be poor if they do. But about

Isabel Denton. The last time I was at Rosemead the girl had shot up into a lovable woman. A handsome, lovable, yes, a marriageable woman, or nearly so.

"Let me see. Eleven and six are seventeen, I have it! I can see the girl don't like me. Indeed, she somehow instinctively connects me with her father's unhappy hypochondria. So must it be unless I make the old driver himself my expurgator. I'll astonish him, before I ask him for money, which of late has come from him like blood-drops."

"I'll propose for Isabel Denton. Propose! I'll rave and swear and play the furious lover, and then I'll produce my plan to postpone the urgency of my suit for three whole years, on condition that he keeps Isabel for that time to her vow of betrothal to me. Ha! ha! ha! He won't stand for a hundred then, and I'll be off to Canada, where my Uncle Fairfax is, I am told, growing into a millionaire—how I don't know. The States, however, must be my aim and end. The war between North and South offers me a grand field. There's fortune to be found in that land of population, political corruption, republican robbery, and repudiation, patriotic plunder, piety, plaster, ninnies, and wooden hams. Why should not I 'salt' a diamond field in California; strike fire in Oleopolis, prospect a silver mine in Utah, or falling these, become a postmaster, a congressman, a general or a secretary of state, and sell my adopted country as its own log-rollers and shingle-splitters do, and thank Heaven that has given me so fine a country to sell?"

"Yes, Vincent Luttrell, the Old-world's played out, at least for a time, so here goes for the New. There, I doubt not, the men will be found—ay, and the women too—not much different from my experiences of their follies, follies, sins, selfishness and scoundrelism in the land of my birth. But first I will call on my dear old friend at Rosemead and his lovely daughter, as my present needs compel me."

That evening Vincent Luttrell booked for Exeter by the night mail from Paddington, and the next day, hiring a post-chaise, he drove the fifteen miles which intervened between that city and Rosemead.

How his proposal sped, how he extorted the "cool hundred," he had spoken of in the shape of an order in favour of Richard Scrivener on a Liverpool house wherein Hugh Denton had invested a large capital as a sleeping partner is narrated in our first chapter. We will now return to the fortunes of Isabel Denton and her father.

## CHAPTER VII.

It was in sooth a lovely scene; bright, fresh and beautiful. The sloping sides of the grassy hills inclined in gentle undulations to form the irregular valley beneath, while the rude and rocky eminences—one could hardly call them mountains—shot in the charming little Goshen with purple, white, or rose-coloured walls, varying according to the sunlight or cloud, or state of the atmosphere.

Here and there the valley was dotted with pretty white houses of various styles and sizes, from the humble cot of the Devonshire peasant to the pretentious villa or cottage orade of the wealthy invalid, or the retired merchant or trader.

At its foot the valley opened out upon the sea-shore, contributing a sparkling trout-stream to the pretty little creek, which, ending in a half-moon bay, gave a living to half a dozen small tradesmen, a like number of lodging-house, keepers and some twenty fishermen with their wives and families.

Among the conspicuous buildings in the limited landscape one of the most noticeable was the rustic church, its barn-shaped chancel of gray stone, crowned by a venerable battlemented tower, overgrown with deep-green ivy of singular luxuriance. Its ancient churchyard, here and there dotted by the square slab and tall iron railings of a family vault, was picturesquely sprinkled over with moss-grown or chalk-white tombstones of every variety of shape, age and colour, and in many instances, of every angle of inclination from the upright. The rough stone wall enclosing "God's acre," included within its circuit a modest paragon with leaden diamond-paned casements, steep roofs and many gables; its rustic porch twined with sweet climatis, and honey-suckle, while the brilliant scarlet of a pyrus japonica glowed on its cream-white wall.

Here dwelt the rural rector, the Reverend Charles Conway, an aged clergyman, whose blameless ministry for more than forty years had realized the ideal "country parson" of Herbert, and whose gradually failing powers were latterly supplemented, in the care of a somewhat straggling and extensive parish, by the assiduous aid of his nephew, the Reverend Evelyn Stewart, whose appointment to the curacy had met with the warm approval of the better

educated portion of the parishioners, to whom the ministrations of the young Oxford B.A. had proved especially acceptable.

Simple, earnest, single-minded, and sincerely devoted to his sacred calling, Evelyn Stewart had passed through his studies, received his ordination, and formed the model of his preaching and teaching upon those sound old Protestant divines who understood the articles, liturgy, and doctrines of the Anglican Reformed Church as a protest and a testimony against the ceremonies, the superstitious, the mysteries, mummeries, Paganism, Popery and priestcraft of the Romish Church. He was untainted by the neology of "Tracts for the Times," or "Essays and Reviews," or by the Puseyism, Faberism, Newmanism and monachism which have found their logical outcome in the rank ritualism, the monkery, millinery, confession, absolution, and other priestly perversions of the Lutheran and liberal creed of our early reformers.

The young clergyman's Evangelicism, as the advanced Romeward priests would asperingly term it, did not, however, lead him towards dissent, or Non-conformists. He accepted the Church of England as a reforming church, partially reformed by our pious ancestors, who did what they could to purify the corruptions of superstitious and ignorant ages; but left some things to be done by those good and earnest reformers who might come after them. And these reforms the young Church of England clergyman was willing to accept from the whole body of the Church of Christ, which he took to be the whole Christian people of the land, as represented in the ruling representative power of the country, its elected and hereditary legislature.

With these feelings and convictions Evelyn Stewart's ministry was so deservedly popular and acceptable to all classes as to leave little room for the spread of Romanising perversion on the one hand or schismatic secession and dissent on the other; hence the parish of Cloverbrook was the most united and self-governed in the whole diocese.

It is not with these matters, however, that our story has to deal, except in so far as the Reverend Mr. Stewart is connected in the fortunes of Isabel Denton and her father.

Circumstances, however, occurred about this time which bound up inseparably the future of Isabel Denton and those of the young clergyman of Cloverbrook. What these were we shall presently see.

Hard by the pretty parish church, which we have attempted imperfectly to describe, was situated the school-house, a humble, red-tiled building, and herein the children of the hamlet were taught the usual branches of a plain English education by the means of an old dame for the younger scholars and the parish clerk for the older boys.

On Wednesdays and Saturdays, Mr. Stewart, with unwearied patience, instructed the little chawbacons in their catechism and their religious duties. On these days also, for the young Oxonian had an excellent ear and a cultivated taste for music, he himself, with the volunteered assistance of Isabel Denton, gave viva voce lessons in psalmody, in general music, part singing and choruses, mostly sacred, but many of them secular. For this purpose the church was opened and the good old organ, by Father Smith, the gift of a pious and wealthy parishioner in the reign of Anne, and still unrivalled in the county except by that in the cathedral, was manipulated alternately by the young curate and Isabel Denton.

We state these facts merely to show that there was no need of any introduction of these two young persons to each other.

On this special afternoon Isabel Denton had sent an apology for non-attendance at the choir practice, and, as was the case, the occurrence of one of her father's distressing visitations. Evelyn Stewart therefore, had but one thought when his duties were over at the church, namely, to call on the sufferer and offer his condolence and his assistance if his services should in any way be required.

He could not deny to himself that his interest in Mrs. Denton's health was greater and his sympathy deeper than ordinary, and that that interest and sympathy had their origin in a strange and unaccounted feeling in which the image of the youthful and innocent Isabel was ever present.

Evelyn Stewart was far from being actuated by vulgar curiosity, but his anxiety to unravel the mystery which he could not help thinking lay at the root of the mental disorder of Isabel's father, made him resolve to seek an explanation. He might, then, be able to alleviate; if he could not entirely dispel, the settled gloom and nervous disquietude which evidently made life a burthen to the father of the good and gracious Isabel.

Revolving these thoughts the zealous young minister took his way up the valley to Rosemead on the evening following that on which we have seen the so-called William Scrivener take his departure for Liverpool.

On reaching the cottage Evelyn Stewart was surprised and pained at the expression of anxiety impressed on the features of Isabel.

"I have come, Miss Denton," said he, extending his hand, which was taken without hesitation, "I hope not intrusively, to reply in person to your letter of this day. Although your absence will be regretted and the loss of your instruction felt by your pupils, yet the cause of your absence is still more distressing, especially to myself. May I waive ceremony and as a friend, clothed by my position and calling, if not by my years, with the character of an adviser and a comforter, ask for a few minutes' conversation on a subject which has lately given me much disquiet?"

Such an unmistakable expression of embarrassment stole over the ingenuous features of Isabel at these words that Evelyn Stewart hated himself for what he reproached himself with being so abrupt a question.

"Pray, pray pardon me, Miss Denton," said he, earnestly. "I had no idea of distressing you, as I see too plainly I have done, by my hasty question. I trust your father is better, but if his medical adviser is of opinion that conversation will aggravate his malady, I will return and pray for his recovery, and await your visit to the rectory or the school-house and there receive such tidings as you may think fit to communicate."

"Nay, Mr. Stewart, do not leave us thus abruptly. I am truly in need of advice, consolation and prayer. Pray accompany me to the parlour, when, such is the varying nature of my poor father's attacks, he may be able to give you the interview I so much desire."

Isabel led the way to the pleasant apartment where we last witnessed the interview of the betrayer and his victim.

The room was vacant.

"Pray be seated, Mr. Stewart," said Isabel, "while I announce your arrival to my father."

Hugh Denton was in his study, a small apartment adjoining his chamber and overlooking the road leading to the cottage. He had perceived the approach of the young clergyman and seemed to hail him, he knew not why, as a deliverer from his paralyzing terrors.

Yet he feared, in his irresolution to communicate anything which should lead, even in the remotest degree, to the discovery of the dreadful secret with which he inseparably connected, the horrors of a jail, a trial for life, a conviction by a jury, a sentence, and the culminating ignominy of a felon's death in presence of an exulting and ferocious crowd. It was, therefore, with an almost querulous and impatient manner that he inquired of Isabel:

"Has anything extraordinary happened, Isabel, to bring good Mr. Stewart up to Rosemead?"

"Nothing, father dear, but the note I wrote to-day apologizing for my absence from the choir practice, on account of my extreme weakness and indisposition."

"I shall never be better, dear Isabel, on this side of the grave, therefore you must not let my sudden illness prevent you from works of charity and usefulness."

"Thank you, father dear, but my place is by your bedside when your terrible affliction so suddenly attacks you. Mr. Stewart, too, is kindly anxious about you. Will you see him, or will the exertion be too much for you?"

Hugh Denton rose from his chair and made a sign to Isabel to lead the way. She obeyed, and he descended to the parlour with unwonted steadiness. On entering Mr. Stewart rose, but Hugh Denton motioned him to a seat, then seating himself in an invalid chair wheeled for him by his attentive daughter, he continued:

"My dear child, do not think that I undervalue Mr. Stewart's kindness or your loving attention, but I fear my own weakness. The cause of my suffering lies too far in the irrevocable past to be relieved by the consolations of friendship, or effaced by change of scene, or any other of the usual remedies for depression of spirits or morbid melancholy. In that cabinet," and he pointed to an old-fashioned ebony escritoire, "is contained a written narrative of my unhappy—yes, and as Heaven is my witness, my unpremeditated, my unintentional crime—and of its awful retribution in this world. Seek not to know farther until the grave shall hide my sorrow. But give me your prayers, my dear Mr. Stewart, that my sufferings here may be taken by Him who tempers justice with mercy as an atonement, an expiation for me in that other and better world to which I am hastening."

"It is not for me, my dear Mr. Denton, to presume to deal the judgments of the Almighty Searcher of hearts, to whom all things are known, and from whom no secrets are hid. To Him it belongs to bind up the wounds of the spirit, and to heal the contrite heart.

If, for the better comfort of our souls, we 'confess one to another' it is a good and scriptural act, but Heaven forbid I should seek, under a wicked and unlawful seal of secrecy, by which the priest becomes the accessory to the crime, to possess myself of the power which no weak man should ever have of punishing, or of shielding from lawful punishment the guilty."

Hugh Denton appeared relieved from a heavy burthen as Evelyn Stewart spoke.

"Yes," he continued; "the law declares, and rightly, that to be a guilty knowledge which conceals a punishable crime; but the artful casuists who place their scheme for subjugating men's souls and bodies and all powers to their pretended spiritual supremacy, absolve themselves from their duty to God and men, and set themselves above all laws. This is the beginning of priestcraft, as opposed to true liberty in Christ, and substituting a poor, frail, and erring man for the one and only Mediator."

"Thank you, thank you, from the bottom of my heart, my dear young friend. You have indeed taken a load from my heart. Let me assure you, upon my solemn word, that my crime—I dare not speak more fully now—was not intentional, though I cannot disguise from myself that my jealous frenzy did at the time urge me to the shedding of blood on the false plea of a duel in satisfaction of my wrongs, real or fancied. Pray for me, my good friend; pray for me, my dear child, and seek not, until my time comes, to further probe my festering wounds until death shall both close them and my sufferings in this world of trial. But the evening invites to a walk, and it would be indeed selfish for me to prevent you its enjoyment. For myself, Isabel, I will take my accustomed seat beneath the embowered porch which looks towards the setting sun, and watch his tranquil descent into the great world of waters. Do not disappoint yourself, my child; of your customary visit to the village."

Why did Isabel Denton blush, and why was Evelyn Stewart embarrassed at these very commonplace remarks?

They were neither of them given to affectation, or to committing gaucheries; they were both of them too candid and too natural for such mistakes; yet Isabel blushed, and rose, as if to go out, then stopped suddenly, walked across the room, and burst into tears. Evelyn Stewart rose also. He was also about to bid Mr. Denton and his daughter good-evening. But, no, he was undecided as to whether he ought not to ask to accompany Miss Denton to the village, and then something whispered that it would be too great a liberty. So he merely looked on and said nothing, while Isabel went through the little, very natural performance of the kiss and the unaccountable flood of tears just noticed.

That flood of tears quite upset his equanimity. He felt he could, if he dared, hug the pretty woman to his bosom and kiss away her tears. And then he felt ashamed of his sudden thought, and blushed or something very like it. Longer silence, however, was impossible.

"My dear Mr. Denton, I feel that I am one too many at this moment. Miss Denton, pardon my want of politeness"—he despised the word, though he used it—"in not offering to escort you to the village, which lies in my homeward road; but the sight of your father's suffering and our recent conversation must be the apology for my absence of mind. Will you accept my arm?"

"Thank you, Mr. Stewart, I thank you sincerely, but I feel at this moment that my place is by my father's side!"

And Isabel Denton, with a sort of mechanical abstraction in her movements and manner, busied herself rearranging her father's pillows and cushions, who lay passively under the little changes of position following her actions with loving eyes.

"Serve me just right for my hypocrisy," thought Evelyn Stewart. "Was it Mrs. Denton's illness that really made me forget good manners? Yet I said so, and am punished for it." After a pause he continued:

"As Miss Denton has deferred her walk for a reason which commands respect, I will take my leave, in the hope that to-morrow I shall have the pleasure and her humble pupils the pleasure and profit of her able instructions. Adieu, my dear sir, and may your health of mind and of body be restored. Good evening, farewell, good-bye, Miss Denton." How he longed to utter the word "Isabel!" "I hope to see you to-morrow at the church, till then, good evening." And the dazed young clergyman shook Isabel by the hand. Their eyes met, hers suffused in tears, his with a warm look of love, and he hurried from the house.

"Evelyn Stewart, it's of no use playing with the matter, you are in love with Isabel Denton," said his inner consciousness. "And what is my duty?" asked conscience. "Either to dismiss that love from

your mind by a strong will, and to conquer it by the firm resolve and reason, or to follow it up by a candid assent, and, if reciprocated, marry the object of your love." "Bah! said a little, laughing urchin, whom ancients and moderns have deified as the God Cupid, "do you think, Mr. Philosopher, that you can help yourself, and dispossess me of my throne and weapon with your reason and resolves and all that sort of rubbish? I've hit you mortally, Mr. Parson, and the wound's incurable except by the one who made it. So leave off parleying and surrender at once." And Evelyn Stewart like a sensible man (or a fool) submitted to his manifest destiny, and walked home to the parsonage without any knowledge of the road time, or distance he travelled, seeing nothing but Isabel Denton and thinking of nothing but how he should frame his declaration, and how she would receive it, and then, for he flattered himself she would accept him and felt conscious he was not indifferent to her, he busied himself with how, when, and in what terms he should "ask papa."

On these points, however, their recent conversation the depressing malady he laboured under, and the absolute necessity for his daughter's society and care, threw him into painful perplexity; and he could come to no other conclusion than that he must act candidly and honourably and leave the rest to Heaven where the proverb declares matches to be made, though many a miserable pair bear testimony to an opinion that they are arranged for in "another place."

(To be continued.)

### THE MAGIC CHAIN.

GRANDAME and grandsire sit at ease  
By the hearthstone old as the daylight  
wanes,  
She with her knitting upon her knees,  
He with his eyes on the darkening  
panes;  
Yet now and then with a glance at her,  
Kindly and sweet as when love began;  
Till at last she says, with a sort of stir:  
"What be you thinkin' o', John, my  
man?"

"I be gatherin' up a chain, Janet,  
The links o' a pure gold chain," says  
he.

"Can't ye gather it up aloud, and let  
Your auld wife know of it, too?" says  
she.

"'Tis the chain o' love that I hold, my  
dear,  
The chain o' our wedded lives," he  
says:

"And the first links sparkle like dewdrops  
clear,  
And wi' ruby kisses o' first love blaze.

"Then heavier, heavier grow the links,  
And here and there dark wi' misfortune's  
tears,

But only the stronger bound, methinks,  
As the good chain lengthens along the  
years.

And here and there, like diamonds, start  
Bright, gleaming jewels, each one a  
prize."

"Ay; they be the bairnies, John, my  
heart!  
The living and gone," she softly sighs.

"And the chain, at its latter and lighter  
end,  
Is strung wi' many a pearl we know."

"Ay; they be the bonnie grandchildren,  
friend!  
And most o' them living," she murmurs  
low.

"And the chain that hath never worn loose,  
Janet,  
Is as bright and light as it used to be."

"Ay; pure gold brightens with use, my  
pet!  
And the latest links are the best," says  
she.

Grandame and grandsire closer draw,  
And clasped their hands in the waning  
light.

Tick, tick! on the wall, in a sort of awe,  
The old clock murmurs of time's dull  
flight.

Chirp, chirp! from the cricket behind the  
log;  
The teapot hums and the embers gleam;

Uncurling and yawning, the old house-  
dog  
Stretches himself for a deeper dream.

N. D. U.





[SIR MORTON'S SECRET.]

## UNDINE;

OR,

## THE FORTUNE-TELLER OF THE RHINE.

## CHAPTER VII.

BRIGHTLY gleamed the river, resplendent was the sunshine; charmingly beautiful looked the old town of Cologne as they approached it once more, with its many-roofed crescent lying close to the sparkling water, as if shaking hands with Deutz by its bridge of boats.

Guy stole a look at his father's face. His eyes were closed, but there was a marble look about the set features which showed the powerful steeling of the nerves to counterfeit calmness.

They drove at once to the hotel. Peter came down to meet them in the court-yard. The fest of the party had left and gone to private lodgings on the outskirts of the town.

It had been a whim of Mrs. Owen's, who, with the caprice of weakness and convalescence, had declared the residence at the hotel unendurable.

He gave them the address and they set forth at once.

Guy had feared it would add to his father's annoyance; but, on the contrary, he seemed to be relieved.

It was a tasteful residence and as they drove through the shaded avenue Guy did not wonder the invalid found the change beneficial.

Edith, extremely astonished at their unlooked-for appearance, came dashing out to meet them.

"Here are our runaways returned. Who would have thought it? I know how it was—you were stupid company for each other. You missed Aunt Hester's cheerfulness—Ralph's merriment—my good nature. Well! you are welcome enough. How pleased Aunt Hester will be. Why, Sir Morton, have you been ill?"

"No, no, my dear; a little used up by continual changing. How is your aunt?"

"Vastly improved; she sits up now for receptions, we call them, and we take her out to the air, Ralph and I; we are an admirable pair of ponies—she'll tell you how we wheel her chair down the walk."

"I must go in and see her."

And Sir Morton passed in, in answer to Sarah's salutation.

Edith detained Guy.

A shrewd observer might have mistrusted such ceaseless chattering. Genuine love has not so much word-welcome at command.

"Oh, Guy, there's something so odd about it! Only think, the daughter of the lady who owns the house—guess, now, who she is?"

"How can I, when my Cologne acquaintance is so limited?"

"Ah, but you have seen her—at least, you know how she looks. We were so astonished. For, you see, when poor auntie grew so sick of that room in the hotel and declared she must go where there was a garden and plenty of green or she should die, we were at our wits' ends. But you know how ready Ralph is. He advertised for a quiet home in the suburbs, and it was answered at once. We knew nothing about the people, only we came and examined the house. Of course we were charmed, you see how pretty it is, but when we came to see the young lady we were all struck with the coincidence."

"What do you mean, Edie? how long you are getting at your subject. Who is it—at what am I to be surprised?"

"I've a mind not to tell you. No, I won't—to pay you for the uncivil speech."

And away she danced into the house.

Guy followed in perplexity.

Her blue silk dress just disappearing into a doorway was the guide he followed until he found himself in a sunny, neatly furnished room, where, propped up with pillows, sat Mrs. Owen, with his father by her side.

She was very pale and fragile looking, but wore her old cheerful, steady smile.

"Guy, my dear boy, how I've longed to see you," said she, holding out her hand.

He clasped it warmly, and, spreading it out in his, said, chidingly:

"What a thin, wasted hand, auntie dearest. I shall want you to make haste and get well now I have come. Do they take good care of you?"

"To be sure. They are excellent children, Ralph and Edith, and Sarah, you know, is perfection in the nursing line. I have done beautifully since I came here, but that noisy, stifled, crowded hotel was near the death of me."

"I am thankful, then, you have made the change. It is very charming here in appearance."

"And in the experience too. Madame D'Almanoff is extremely kind and Irena is very winning. She is like a child of mine already. Oh, yes, we are so happy here, I shall leave reluctantly. But I think, Sir Morton, I shall turn back to England as soon as

my strength permits. I shall hardly be equal to the proposed journey."

"I shall accompany you, Hester. It is too much for me also. If these giddy young people must wander all over the earth, let them be married and then they will need no chaperon."

Edith blushed half-angrily, and ran out of the room with the excuse:

"I must find Ralph; he will be so surprised. He has gone to find some flowers for my vase."

She returned in a few moments, but not with Ralph.

A young girl was her companion; and as Edith—with one arm around her waist—drew her forward her face was for the moment averted.

When, however, she turned it modestly towards them Guy's heart came flying to his throat, and he could scarcely conceal his agitation.

It was Undine herself!

"Our dear Irena, Sir Morton, Mademoiselle D'Almanoff, Guy. You must be as good friends as the rest of us already are," said Edith, earnestly.

The beautiful Irena's cheek was softly flushed, and her eyes sparkled archly; but she responded to the introduction to Guy as to an entirely new acquaintance.

Guy was himself too confused to notice the deadly pallor which settled on his father's cheek as his wild glance fell upon that youthful face.

Both Mrs. Owen and Edith were also absorbed in watching for Guy's astonished recognition of the portrait, and Sir Morton had time to recover a little composure ere he answered her salutation.

Guy soon discovered that she had kept silence concerning their first meeting and her previous knowledge of him.

His spirits, so long depressed, rose buoyantly, and his brilliancy astonished Edith as much as Irena. Sir Morton sat like one spellbound, and on the plea of a headache soon asked to retire to the room he was to occupy.

Madame D'Almanoff did not appear—she was also indisposed.

Ralph returned presently from his floral expedition and the young people strayed off from the house with joyous spirits.

Guy could scarcely restrain his hilarious delight from unseemly boisterousness. The previous anxiety and gloom only made the rebound of his spirits more elastic. All care seemed suddenly lifted from him. He was only to be happy in the present.

"I wonder if he found an elixir anywhere on those inland travels," whispered Ralph to Edith.

She looked puzzled, but by no means dissatisfied. "Never mind the cause but let us enjoy the marvel. Though it is not strange the poor fellow is glad to be with us again."

Ralph could better interpret the eager glances Guy cast upon Irena and was resolved to discover the secret of the mutual understanding his keen eye had detected.

As for Irena herself, there was a slight trace of embarrassment in her manner. If she responded with a cheery smile to Guy's merry sally, she checked herself the moment after with a half-frightened air, as though she had committed some wrong deed.

Guy noticed it with sorrow, and found opportunity to say, in a low tone, which could not reach the others:

"Alas! I perceive that Undine has not yet forgotten that unknown sin of mine."

"Nay, not of yours. Heaven forbid I should be so unjust as that!" answered she, warmly.

"May I cheer myself with the thought that whatever it is—which leads a horror to my name, there is none of it reflected upon my individual self?"

"I should be unkind indeed to allow you to doubt it. You, from whom I have known only grand and heroic acts, of whom I have heard only what is good and noble."

"Then, I pray you, banish that look of uneasiness in my presence. It almost seems that you fear some harm to result from my society."

She sighed and blushed faintly.

"Perhaps I ought, or, rather, perhaps I have reason to dread you may approach me hereafter. It is all so strange—I am bewildered and troubled."

"If I might only know this inexplicable mystery!" exclaimed he, impatiently.

"If I might only tell you!" returned Irena, sorrowfully. "Pray let us talk of something else."

"Allow me to thank you for keeping silence concerning our previous meeting. I have held it so sacred that not a living soul has heard a word from me in relation to it. It would have been a sore trial to hear Ralph's bantering jests about so sacred a subject."

"I perceived that Edith knew nothing about it, and she is your betrothed."

She fixed her beautiful eyes questioningly upon his face.

He coloured with annoyance, and was half-angry, half-ashamed of the impulse which prompted him to reply, hastily:

"Yes; our fathers arranged it years ago. Edith and I have agreed to fulfil it, if there is no other attachment for either."

She looked over to Edith and Ralph with a half-smile.

"I was somewhat puzzled; it is explained now."

Ralph at that moment came forward.

"Where is Sir Morton, Guy? I have not seen him yet."

"He was much fatigued, and went to lie down. I had forgotten about it. I must go and see how he is, since Peter is not here."

He went at once to the house.

The little pang of self-accusation would have been far more keen had Guy seen that father when he reached the seclusion of the roomy chamber allotted to him.

His first movement had been to bolt the door; then he began to wring his hands wildly.

"Why, oh, why did I obey that warning letter? The only safety for me was to return to Cologne at once. Alack! it is the safety of the fire itself. Am I lost, indeed? I seem to have fallen into the very trap I dreaded. What shall I do? Oh, what shall I do?"

He walked frantically to and fro, and then paused again to mutter, fiercely:

"I am caught in the net. If I go away at once they will suspect something wrong and it will give support to the miserable story they can tell. Good Heaven! this girl, who is she? She is the living image of one who, by this time, should have the added weight of twenty years. Oh, I guess it—I cannot doubt who it is; but the mother, the mother! Can I face her? can I brave her eye? can I keep off the looks which would ruin me? They will suspect it, all of them. Oh, if I dared confess all and cast off this terrible load; but the shame, the ruin, the blasted hopes of my poor Guy! No, no! I could not bear it—I must fight on. Would to Heaven I had died ere I saw the Rhine at all. Those old days have risen up vividly enough before, but now—oh, now the haunting ghost takes a deadly shape. I must face it. I must throttle the accusation somehow, but my heart sinks within me. Oh, have I not bitterly enough atoned for my sin? why did I listen to the fiend's whisper? It is too late now. I must

walk in the path I have set. I must reap as I have sown."

He clasped his hands over his throbbing forehead, uttered a deep groan, reeled a moment against the wall, rallied enough to reach the bedside, and there fell prostrate.

Guy found him cold and senseless.

His frantic call for help brought all the household to the room, among them the tall, stately figure and majestically sad face of Madame D'Almanoff.

Even amidst his agitated alarm, Guy recognised her as the lady Edith and he had observed in the public square and christened Zenobia.

She stood aloof from the others, and her mournful eyes wandered questioningly over the pallid, insensible face.

It was evident, if she had ever seen him before, she found now no familiar look.

She gave prompt orders for a physician, and sought to soothe the alarm of his relatives.

It was she who promptly led the trembling Mrs. Owen back to her own room and stationed Edith beside her, to quiet the excitement which might occasion a relapse for herself.

She superintended the hot baths which Guy proposed, and chafed as vigorously as the latter upon the joy hands, but the moment the rigid eyelid fluttered, and the chest heaved with returning life, she beckoned Ralph to her place and quietly retreated.

She might have spared the thoughtful movement. He knew no one.

The glittering eyes rolled wildly from side to side, and the heavy tongue articulated, thickly, fierce sentences, which were at first hopelessly gibberish, but presently they could catch the name.

"Guy! Guy!"

"I am here, dear father," said Guy, tenderly bending over him.

He fairly shrieked, and, sinking down into the bedclothes, cried, imploringly:

"Go away! go away! Spare me, Guy! Mercy, mercy! I have suffered enough!"

Guy drew back with a frightened look.

"His mind is affected. I have feared it for some time. His conduct has been unaccountable ever since we arrived in the German States. Will the physician never come?"

"He lives some distance," observed Madame D'Almanoff; "he is the only reliable one for such a case, or I would have given directions for a speedier help, but be sure Hans will bring him as speedily as possible."

By the time the physician arrived the patient's cheeks were flushed fiery scarlet, and he moaned and shrieked with pain.

"Brain fever," beyond question, though it is just possible we may throw it off."

Guy sighed, and yet it was with relief.

All this strange behaviour of late came of course of physical causes.

What an immense weight that belief took from him.

"Has the gentleman had any strong excitement of late, any unusual presence of care, or trying bereavement or anxiety concerning his business affairs?" inquired the physician.

Guy shook his head.

"The only possible cause that I can suggest is the narrow escape we met, a month since, by the explosion of a steamer in which we were coming to Cologne."

"Rather peculiar! that should have produced more immediate effect according to my ideas. You are sure there is no secret trouble."

"None that any of his family can imagine," replied Guy, and then, remembering the mysterious paper which had determined their return to Cologne, his misgivings returned, but he did not confide them to any one.

"He will need utter quiet, only one person at a time in the room. But one to tend him, if that is possible, and I would suggest that you secure an experienced nurse. In such a case as this the merest blunder of a well-meaning but agitated friend would be fatally injurious."

"His old servant, Peter, is very dextrous; and we have also Peter's wife, who has taken all the care of Mrs. Owen, your other patient."

"They may do, but be sure that their attachment to their master will not affect their firmness."

"I think we may rely upon them."

"Very well, the medicines and directions are yonder. I could not write them in English—you perceive I speak it with difficulty. That will be another objection to your servants; we shall find it difficult to understand each other."

"True. I will adopt your suggestion. Can you recommend one?"

The doctor hesitated a moment, then wrote an address on a card.

"That is the best nurse in Cologne. I saw her on my way here, and she asked me to find her a situation—quite a coincidence!"

He smiled blandly, bowed and disappeared.

Guy carried the card to Madame D'Almanoff.

She changed colour as she read the name, looked away abstractedly for a few moments, and then signified her intention of sending for the woman at once.

## CHAPTER VIII.

Guy joined the group gathered soberly around Mrs. Owen's easy-chair.

"How sad it is, Guy," said Edith; "it really seems that there is some spell against our further advance. An evil eye seems to have looked upon us ever since we reached the Rhine, and a decree is gone forth that we must leave Cologne. One would almost expect there would presently come some startling revelation."

Guy sighed.

"And what does the physician say?" inquired Mrs. Owen.

"He fears brain fever, and so strongly recommended a German nurse that I have sent for one. You must help me make peace with Peter and his wife. Madame D'Almanoff is with him now. I only came to give you this explanation. I must return to relieve her before he rouses again. The utmost quiet and caution are enjoined."

He turned as he spoke to leave the room.

Irena came forward as he reached the threshold with a face full of earnest sympathy.

"I am so sorry for you, Mr. Morlaux," said she, "but do not give way to evil forebodings. I questioned the doctor myself, and he had no fears for his life."

"Thank you for your sympathy, I dare not linger now to explain how grateful it is."

As he reached the chamber door Madame D'Almanoff with a face as pale as death stole softly from the bedside.

"Oh, sir, I am so thankful you have come?" whispered she; "he has been perfectly furious."

She did not pause to hear Guy's excuses and apologies for leaving her there but hurried from the room.

A slight bustle drew her attention, and she passed down the stairs quickly to hush it.

It was the newly arrived nurse—a tall, immensely powerful-looking woman, dressed in a soft gray robe, with a white linen cap over her iron-gray hair, and huge blue glasses over her eyes.

Madame D'Almanoff seized her by the hand—drew her upstairs hastily, but not into the patient's chamber, for she led her into her own private room, closed the door carefully, and in a voice of strong excitement, said:

"Mercie, what does this mean?"

"I don't see anything very difficult to read. I have come to nurse the sick Englishman. The doctor sent me."

"Mercie, I have yielded too much already. It is indescribable torture to have these people here, his relations. But because you insisted so urgently upon it I consented. I will not blindly follow your commands any farther. You must give me some explanation, or I will not send you into that room."

"I don't ask you to send me, Hilda; the doctor has already done it. Don't be absurd and spoil everything. If Irena should recognize me through my disguise, give her a hint to be quiet. She is far more tractable than you, but she has never seen my nurse's costume, and might be startled."

Madame D'Almanoff looked anxious and distressed.

"Mercie, go back and send another nurse, I beg of you."

"I would cut my hand off first," was the fierce reply. "Did I dodge the doctor's steps for nothing?—shall I refuse this propitious, Heaven-sent opportunity? I am ashamed of your weakness, Hilda! What distresses you? what do you fear?"

"That you will carry your fierce, implacable hatred even against this innocent sufferer, because he bears that hapless name. I am afraid you will harm him, only because he is a Morlaux."

Mercie laughed scornfully.

"How little you know me. What a fierce demon you would make me to be. I did not expect it of you, Hilda."

Madame D'Almanoff began to weep.

"If you ever confided in me, it would be different; but your strange, wild life—your mysterious movements—your long absences, well may they undermine my confidence."

"And so you cannot have faith in me," Hilda, Hilda, who has cared for you and your child in these bitter years that have gone? Who has toiled early and late, every way, and in all fashions to earn gold



to keep you two in comfort? Who has devoted herself, heart, soul and body, to your welfare—to avenge your wrongs—to right your grievances? Who has not had a single personal aim for twenty years, but has lived and toiled and planned alone for you and your unfortunate child? And is this my reward?"

Intense bitterness was in the fierce tone. Madame D'Almanoff flung herself weeping violently into her arms.

"Forgive, oh, forgive, my Mercie! I know your unselfishness—your generous devotion, but this strange mystery appals and frightens me. And when I remember that terrible vow of yours I am giddy and faint. If you would only confide your plans to me."

"And have them upset at the outset? No, no, Hilda, you are not fit for such things. You are for such scenes as I have placed you in—amid the gentle refinements of life, for me are its hard work and rough ways. Let it pass. I complain not—I am content to see you and the child in your natural sphere. And if I spare all the baffling hopes and fears—the ominous clues—the horrible suspicions until I obtain certainty, ought you not rather to be grateful than to reproach me?"

"Pardon, pardon, Mercie! I am a poor, weak creature—I ought to grovel in the dust at your feet."

"You are my stately, beautiful Hilda, of whom I was always proud, even in my giddyest day. If blight and harm came to my darling, I take the blame to myself. I was the elder, I should have guarded you more jealously. Oh, my Hilda, if I work and plan strangely, it is for love of you and the child—to right your wrongs, the wrong my short-sightedness permitted; but trust me a little longer, Hilda; something whispers to me that the glad result is near—the magical clue in my hand."

The two women stood sobbing and embracing. The nurse was the first to recover composure.

"Now I must go to the patient. You are ready to assist me all you can, I trust."

"I suppose so. The young man seems much alarmed."

"You mean the son—he who bears the name we shudder to speak?"

"Yes, Mercie."

"He is a noble youth. I have marked him well."

"You have seen him? Why, he only arrived today," exclaimed the other, with astonishment.

The brilliant black eyes behind the blue glasses flashed triumphantly.

"Yes, Hilda, I have seen him. He little guesses it was my work, his abrupt return hither."

"Then he will know you."

"Not he, that is the least of my concern. But I like the lad; I mean that he shall marry Irena."

Madame D'Almanoff held up her hands.

"Mercie, you are certainly demented. It is impossible, even if the insuperable obstacles on her side were removed. He is already engaged."

"Yes; to the little blue-eyed Edith, who is so innocently in love with the other Englishman. You can tell me nothing about them, Hilda, I know the whole."

"I believe you are a witch, Mercie."

"So do a great many other people; there's nothing like a quick wit, sharp ears, and watchful eyes, added to a witch's reputation. I assure you it works wonders. Come, let us go to the patient. It is only fair that I should nurse him. I suspect my messages have driven him half-frantic. No matter, he deserves it—if—"

She paused with such a fiery look, her companion again caught her hands.

"You will not harm him, Mercie; promise me that."

"No, no, it is for my interest that he recovers, be he innocent or guilty!"

And, thus reassured, Madame D'Almanoff led the way to Sir Morton's chamber.

The lady was fluttered and agitated, but the gray-robed nurse responded to Guy's queries with the utmost coolness.

"Oh, yes, monsieur, I can manage him. I am very strong, you see; it is my best recommendation, these stout arms of mine," and she extended them triumphantly. "I've taken care of many a poor fellow raving mad with fever, and never had any ill luck yet. But it isn't a good thing to have much talking in this next room. You look tired, monsieur. Go and rest, and have confidence in me. Maybe the doctor said you could trust me?"

"He recommended you very highly, but it is natural I should be anxious. I shall sleep in this ante-room, in case of being needed, and, when I do not, Peter will relieve me. You shall choose your own hours of being relieved."

"I'll wait till I see how he appears. I'm fresh for the night at all events. Where are the medicines and the directions?"

Guy pointed them out, saw the new nurse bathing the head in iced water, and really seeming to soothe the restlessness of the patient, and slipped quietly away.

This new illness had very seriously dampened the spirits of the party.

Even Ralph looked uneasy and troubled. Mrs. Owen had retired quite indisposed, and Sarah was at work ever her.

Peter very sulkily took his place in the ante-room according to Guy's instructions.

As the latter anticipated, he was extremely indignant at being ousted from his master's bedside by the strange nurse.

Guy threw himself wearily into a chair, and leaning his head on his hand sat, dejectedly silent.

He was roused by a slight touch on his shoulder. Irena stood there before him, her soft, dark eyes full of wistful sympathy.

She placed a tiny tray holding a cup of coffee and a slice of toast persuasively before him.

"We shall have you ill also, I fear," said she in that sweet, low voice of hers; "try a little of this, I beg of you. After your wearisome journey, you have not taken a particle of refreshment."

"I had not thought of it," exclaimed Edith, apologetically. "It is very kind of you, Irena."

Guy looked up into Irena's face with a grave smile.

"Thank you, Undine."

"Undine?" cried Edith; "what a queer mistake. That is not her name."

"Isn't it?" said Guy, while he sipped the coffee. "I rather like it, though, and if she has no objections I may fall into the mistake quite naturally."

Irena smiled.

"It does not matter about a name," began she, and then she paused, evidently distressed by some painful recollection, and turning red and pale alternately, added, hastily: "At least, I mean, I shall not mind what you call me. But there is a condition, if it is my name, no one else must be allowed to use it."

"Just like one of your queer fancies, Guy," observed Edith, "but, Irena, you must humour him as we all do. I'd retort and call him Knishond, if I were you."

"A fellow who was always up to wicked pranks, plunging unwary travellers into foaming rivers, showering down his waterpots, and leaving his victims to perish in them. Will you call me such a name, Undine?" asked Guy.

"Oh, no!" cried Irena, hastily.

"Thank you, I knew you couldn't be so hard-hearted as this little countrywoman of mine. Now, Undine was everything charming, sweet and noble."

"Oh, Guy, she had no soul," exclaimed Edith, triumphantly.

"I beg your pardon; her warm, generous heart earned one for her since as pure as that of her selfish, frivolous rival. But we'll not wish for Made-moiselle D'Almanoff such a sad fate. She shall only be the Undine of the forest, not of the castle."

"Oh, Guy, what has become of that miniature? I've promised Irena she should see it. It was so odd. She knows nothing about its loss, says an aunt of hers owned one. Do you suppose you can find it in your trunk, or was it left with the baggage at the hotel?"

"I think if I search I shall come across it."

"Don't forget it: I want her to see it."

"Let us try the air," exclaimed Ralph, who had been wonderfully silent for him.

"I must take another look at my father. I think the stars are out, Ralph; wait a few moments, and we shall have the moon."

He returned from a hasty visit to the sick-room and they sauntered out upon the lawn.

It seemed tacitly understood that they should walk in couples, and Ralph and Edith led the way.

Thus Guy was left to offer his arm to Irena. They walked in silence a few moments, and then Guy said, mischievously:

"Did you really wish to see the miniature, made-moiselle?"

"I was somewhat curious, but not on account of the likeness; only to trace whence it came."

"I recognized it at once, notwithstanding: it was so much brighter in expression than the pale face of my Undine. And I have kept it with me ever since."

As he spoke he drew forth the narrow black ribbon encircling his neck, and showed to her the likeness suspended to it.

The dimness concealed the glow which mantled her cheek.

"It is singular from whence it came," murmured she.

"I can tell you. It was dropped for me by a singular character; I think they call her in Collogue 'the Fortune-teller of the Rhine.'"

"It is very strange," murmured Irena.

"Do you know the fortune-teller?"

"I have heard of her," stammered the girl.

"And you have never consulted her?" persisted Guy, resolute to learn if the same prediction given him had been repeated to her.

"No, indeed."

"You speak energetically. Should you object to such a course?"

"Decidedly."

"May I venture to ask why?"

"Because the past has enough of grief, the present of pain, without vexing myself over the future's ill."

"But it may all be sunshine and delight."

"Not for me," was the grave reply.

"Heaven grant your words find a speedy refutation. Surely all gladness and honour and happiness should wait upon your pathway."

She shivered.

"No, no, it is impossible, a blight is upon me. Ask me no more, I implore you."

"Oh, for a key to all this mystery!" sighed Guy, inwardly.

## CHAPTER IX.

"THINGS HAVE COME TO A PRETTY PASS!" growled Peter, the next morning, as he paced outside the house getting the fresh air, while Guy relieved the nurse and his wife took his place in the ante-room: "turning off Sir Morton's old servants from tending him, and bringing in this queer, upstart old woman. Master Guy will rue the day, I can tell him. She's an impostor, if I know anything. Didn't I see her last night, when she thought I was sound asleep, didn't I see her with my two eyes, a turning over master's clothes, and searching every single pocket? It's a thief she is, as sure as my name's Peter. She'll find out all there is to be stolen, and she'll be off with it. I won't warn Mr. Guy, if so be he can't trust old Peter. I'll let him see how young folks can be cheated. I'll watch her as sharp as a cat does a mouse, and I'll catch her in the act. Then we'll see what they'll say."

"There's that beautiful watch and the big seal, and the diamond breast-pin, and the shield ring. She can get them all together. I hope she will, and then I'll pounce upon her. Maybe they'll give poor old Peter some credit then. I've no doubt the pocket-book is there too—it's just like Mr. Guy's carelessness. As if these outlandish bodies could be trusted anyhow! He'll find out about it before long, I reckon. Oh, dear! how thankful I shall be to see old England again! I've had enough of travelling. It's been a snarl ever since we started; first one ill, and then the other. Talk about its being healthy! England's the only place where they don't have accidents and blow-ups and fevers. And then the things we have to put up with! These foreign doctors is bad enough, but when it comes to nurses too it's just my idea that it's downright imposition."

And having thus relieved the vexation, which had been working all night, Peter went back to his station and took his seat in grim silence, just where, through a wide crack in the door, he could command a very good view of the movements within the sick-room.

Honest Peter was not mistaken in his ideas as regards the lawless investigations of the new nurse.

She had, indeed, closely examined the contents of the pockets in all Sir Morton's clothing, taking advantage of the deep stupor which alternated with his wild paroxysms.

The next night, to his increased horror, Peter's wide-awake eyes detected her unlocking the portmanteau, which she brought noiselessly from a wardrobe.

The worthy servant could scarcely refrain from springing forward and snatching it away from the sacrilegious fingers, as he christened them, without any very definite idea of the exact meaning of the term.

Then he remembered he had her safe, since his vigilant guard barred her way to escape, and he wanted her to proceed to the utmost length, ere he pounced upon her, and triumphantly exposed to Master Guy the danger he had risked, as well as the great slight he had put upon a faithful old servant.

While these thoughts flitted through Peter's head, and his eyelids, instead of being—like all others in the silent mansion excepting the strange nurse's—heavy with sleep, stared vigilantly forward, the woman Mercie, on her knees before the open portmanteau, was sifting it over thoroughly.

Peter's eyes nearly protruded from their sockets as the light of the candle she had placed on the floor, shaded from the sleeper's face by the foot-board of the bed, shining over the stooping figure, showed him his master's huge pocket-book turned swiftly over.

What was she doing? counting the money?

No; for she left the bank-notes in their neat pile, and nimbly and noiselessly gathered all the papers in her hand, and then laid down the book unheeded.

Now Peter made another discovery. The blue glasses were a cheat, a disguise.

She had laid them away, and was seeking eagerly, and with perfect ease, for those glittering black eyes darted from line to line of every paper there.

Peter was puzzled, till a bright idea came into his mind.

"Ah, she does not touch the money! She is a sharp one—that might betray her by being traced. She is after cheques without doubt. Or, maybe, she is finding out the whole amount, to be realized, and means to take her time. She little dreams that faithful old Peter is watching over his master's affairs, if he is turned away from his sick-bed."

And to make sure of her deception, he counterfeited a heavy snore, and chuckled as he saw her start and then turn her head and listen to the regular, sonorous blasts he got up for her especial benefit.

She rose at length from her knees, put the papers carefully back into the pocket-book, and the pocket-book into the portmanteau, and carried the latter back to the wardrobe.

Then she came back, and Peter heard a heavy, disappointed sigh as she sank into her seat by the bedside, and dropped her head forward into her hands.

She did not stir from this position for two hours. By that time Peter's knees began to ache from the crouching position he had assumed, and a rigidity crept into his hitherto wakeful eyelids.

Involuntarily he gaped and nodded. He struggled manfully against it, but the gentle insidious power, such a beneficent blessing at some times, and such a ruinous foe at others, was too powerful even for Peter.

He rolled over gently toward the mattress placed upon the floor for his benefit, and in ten minutes was snoring in bona fide earnest.

Thus it was Peter lost the most important scene in the little drama.

For toward morning the patient, moaning and tossing fiercely, induced the nurse to get a towel of crushed ice and pass it softly a few times over the tormented head.

The little streams percolating down the neck were being wiped away with a careful hand, when suddenly the black eyes glimmered with a quick sparkle of triumph.

The nurse stooped, and peered cautiously beneath the linen neck-band.

A black ribbon in one place worn away, showing the glitter of a steel chain, drew her attention.

She caught her breath with a quick gasp, and turned away a moment to utter a deep exclamation of thanksgiving, then returned, wide-awake and adroit.

She passed the soothing, numbing bandage of ice again across his forehead, watched the nervously twitching eyelids settle down into quiet, the restless arms drop listlessly upon the coverlid, and then with one icy-cold hand still upon his forehead, swiftly and firmly seized hold of the ribbon, and drew it up.

The patient lay listless: and she, with gleaming eyes, dextrously and neatly as a pickpocket might have manipulated, disengaged the small envelope of oiled silk fastened to the ribbon-bound chain, and carried it to the light.

She tore open the little bundle of yellow papers so carefully secreted within, gave one glance over them, and sank on her knees, shaking like one stricken with palsy.

"Oh, Heaven be praised, I have found them! He was innocent! Oh, Guy, Guy!" gasped the strange woman, as she clasped those trembling hands and raised her streaming eyes to heaven.

A deep groan from the bed aroused her, and she sprang up, laid the ice on his forehead, and hurriedly

folded a paper from her own pocket, carefully fitted it to the oiled-silk receptacle and replaced it on the chain, and thrust the whole beneath the clothing once more.

Then she sank into a chair with gleaming eyes, her breath coming pantingly, like one sternly controlling extreme agitation.

When Sir Morton had been first put into the bath Guy had noticed this little parcel so singularly worn by his father, and spoken of it to Peter, who had answered, promptly:

"La, Mr. Guy, master's worn that ever since I knew him. I expect, from something he said one day when I put on a new ribbon for him, that it's a keepsake or a love-letter of your mother's, Mr. Guy. He said it was to be buried with him, if anything sudden happened, and never touched."

"Nor shall it be!" had Guy replied, little dreaming in how short a time unceremonious hands should thus possess themselves of the precious relic.

At break of day Guy appeared.

"I have come to relieve you, nurse. I hope you have had a comfortable night."

"Unusually quiet, monsieur."

"You must be glad to have an opportunity to breathe the fresh air. Go now, and revive yourself."

She went out swiftly, trod softly by the door of Madame D'Almanoff and her daughter, descended the stairs as quickly and silently as a cat, and unlocking the door, fairly leaped out into the cool, invigorating air of the early morning.

At a closely screened bank in the hedge-bordered garden she paused and flung herself prostrate upon the ground. Then the pent-up agitation found vent.

Streams of scalding tears poured down her cheeks, she sobbed convulsively, and at length, when the tears had cooled the fierce heat of her brain, she sank upon her knees and said a short but fervent prayer of thanksgiving.

"Oh, Guy, Guy! you were good, you were noble, you were true! This blessed truth is all I can think of now. How I have wronged your memory with my wild hate! Ah, it was the bitterer for the passionate love I had hidden so long within my breast. You never knew, my noble Guy, how poor Mercie worshipped the very ground you trod on—you, whose thoughts were all bound up in Hilda; but now, up there in the shining heavens, you surely have a tender smile waiting for her, that she has redeemed your good name and restored to your dear ones their long-forfeited rights! Ah, not in vain have I toiled and planned and worked secretly, openly, by day and by night. I have redeemed my vow. Ah, had I known it would take these eighteen dreary years would not my courage have failed me? Yet it was for their sakes I began. Did I dream, on my knees, with solemn joy I should rejoice in knowing it ended for yours, my Guy?"

These words poured over her pale lips in an impetuous torrent, and the rapt look in the upraised eyes fixed wistfully upon the sky, where the crimson glories of the morning gathered, showed she was utterly unconscious they were spoken at all.

The closing of the house door reminded her of some one's approach.

She gathered herself up, shook out the wrinkles and patches of grass from her gray dress, resumed the odious blue spectacles, and sat down in apparent composure.

She heard the measured steps walking to and fro, but no one approached her retreat, and she remained quietly recovering from the strong excitement of the night, until she heard Irena's voice in a low, morning hymn.

She smiled softly then.

"His child! the dearest thing left on earth for me—dearer, and more precious than even Hilda. Have I not earned a fortune for her? have I not led on the smooth issue for all this tangled snarl of hateful circumstances? The boy loves her, and it is easy to read the secret of that timid, innocent heart of hers. And he is worthy—yes, even of the name he bears; the symbol now, as once of old, of all high, heroic qualities, of all noble, trustworthy manhood. But he must not die, this arch villain, who lies smitten with his own guilty conscience. We must tend him as faithfully as we would a better man, that the general joy of explanation may not be marred. A repentant sinner can be gently dealt with; but a man dead with his guilty deeds unspoken would be a perpetual grief. And so he must not die."

She rose and turned in the direction of Irena's voice, and then checked herself.

"I think my wits have forsaken me. I was going to speak with her—I forgot she had made no acquaintance with the Prussian nurse. Ah, here comes that grim old Peter. How sharply he eyes me! The saints said he was not watching me last night. No matter now, thank Heaven! I am able to defy them all."

"Good morning, Mrs.—I believe I haven't heard your name," began Peter, as he came stalking down the walk.

"A very fine morning, Herr Peter. We had a very quiet night."

"A-hem! well, yes, I believe we did. I believe you like quiet nights, Mrs.—a-hem! I've really forgotten your name."

"That's not of account, Herr Peter; it is not so easily made over into English."

"To be sure!" exclaimed Peter, just struck with the thought; "it is rather odd you should understand me. Out in the street I have to talk by signs altogether. Was that the reason Mr. Guy sent for you? It is better, to be sure, to know both languages."

"Rather," replied Mercie, drily, "where the doctor's German and the patient English."

"How did you learn? It must have taken a deal of patience, after being brought up to such an outlandish tongue as they speak in these parts."

"I was young when I commenced, and I've had some practice since."

"You've nursed sick Englishmen before, perhaps?"

"Yes, I've nursed an Englishman before!" and her lip twitched a little, and she tried to move on. But Peter obstinately detained her.

"Did he live or die?"

Her voice was hollow, despite her efforts, as she returned, hastily:

"He died."

"Dear me! I hope it wasn't your treatment. You will make me uneasy about master. I know well enough when he comes to his senses he'll ask at once for Peter; and, according to my thinking, it ought to have been Peter from the commencement."

"I see," thought Mercie; "the poor old man is jealous of me;" and aloud she answered:

"I am sure, Peter, you are a great deal of use now; and when he isn't so critically sick, you will have the most of the care. You see I'm used to desperate cases, and I know the doctor's ways; that's why they sent for me, not from any questioning of your capability, I am sure, my good Peter."

As she finished she pushed resolutely by him and walked rapidly up the path into the house.

Peter looked after her, mimicking her tone.

"Good Peter, indeed! I guess, my smart lady, you'll talk differently by-and-by. If your patient died, I presume his property departed also in mysterious fashion. But it won't be so in this case; just you go to nibbling the bait in earnest, and you'll find out the trap I've set."

(To be continued.)

## LURED AND LOST.

### CHAPTER XXX.

We must now return to the startling announcement made by Gerald that he had discovered the infamous plans of his wife.

Instead of flying upon Gerald, as he expected, Victoria suddenly drew back, the expression of her face changed to joy, and she flung herself into a chair with a low laugh of malicious triumph.

Gerald turned round at the shutting of the door behind him, and beheld a hideous man standing there, bowing most servilely.

What could be seen of his visage was livid, discoloured and swelled, one eye was bandaged up with a black silk handkerchief and the other blinked redly from one to the other of the onlookers. His clothes were seedy in the extreme and he walked exceedingly lame by the aid of a stout stick.

To this beggarly object Victoria telegraphed a few rapid signs, describing what was up and how his help would be efficient.

The man kept stolidly bowing to the master of the house.

"Who is this man?" demanded Travers, haughtily. "How dare you intrude in this manner?"

"If the lady and gent will sit down for a werry few minutes," said Long Tom, a little unsteadily.

"I'll open my story in less than no time. It concerns you, mister."



Victoria leaned back in her chair delighted and winked to her comrade. Long Tom had arrived at last in the very nick of time and was going to pull the business through in his way.

"Leave us!" said Trauers, impetuously; "we cannot be troubled with you to-day."

"It concerns you, sir," repeated the ruffian; "and here's the first on it. A good many years ago an old woman as kept what we call a 'school' for young thieves, and had a shop for the stolen goods, and boarding for all sorts, came across a monstrous nice-looking little gal who used to help her father sell oranges. The old woman took a fancy to the kid—"

Here an interruption occurred. Victoria, sitting bolt upright in her chair, with her lips parted and her eyes glaring, tapped her slippers upon the floor to attract Long Tom's attention.

He did not glance toward her, but Gerald Trauers did; and the result was he sat down also, and said, "Go on."

"And bought her from the old orange-seller," resumed Long Tom, precisely where he had left off, "to bring her up as a decoy, ye know, for to bring luck to the den. She was about ten when she began her eddication at Mother Mouser's school, and at eighteen she were turned out as finished a limb as ever gammoned the quality. She had been brought up careful, and was a honour to the school. She could talk the thieves' Latin, and pick a pocket, and crack a house, and drug a swell with any one. She was up to every dodge, and, besides that, she could act so like a real lady that not a soul would believe she wasn't a real belle. She was put up just to fool the green ones, you understand, and many's the time she did it too."

What—what did he mean? Never was Victoria so stunned in her life. But, of course, he was "playing possum" with the swell; why should she feel uneasy? Long Tom wasn't the boy to get white-livered all on a sudden, just when the game was waiting there to be bagged. She'd soon see, no doubt, what dodge he was up to.

"By-and-bye," continued the narrator, "the gal fell in with a certain chap, and nicely fooled him into thinkin' the sun didn't shine on a steadier, nicer female, so for sheer contrariness (since the chap wasn't much of a catch for such a fancy gal after all) off she slopes from Mother Mouser and marries him."

"Marries him!" echoed Gerald Trauers, in a hollow voice.

Then he leaned back in his chair with a red, red flame growing in each cheek, while his down-dropped eyes began to blaze.

Did the victim suspect anything? Victoria tried to catch her comrade's eye, but in vain. Was the idiot going to go so far that the whole thing would burst up?

"He was downright good to her," again the narrator went on; "and he got a mighty store by her, but she got tired of playin' goody with him before more'n a year or two was over their heads, so she cleared out and left him and his old folks in the country to take care of themselves. She went back to the old crib, and fared round town for awhile doin' all sorts of jobs. She was a capital hand at forging, and tried two or three larks on that lay that paid well, so Mother Mouser determined to set her upon a bit o' business that 'ud take the cleverest of the gang to put through. The old female's son had got a situation as telegraph operator in an office—(for nobody knows what you'll pick up in a place like that)—and he larned from some despatches that was goin' that there was a young gent flyin' round the country under an assumed name, as was worth a mint o' money; and he knowed no more of flash gänge than a suckin' baby. So Mother Mouser and her son nosed out all about him, and then set this gal on to catch him, marry him, get hold of all his money—"

Long Tom stopped abruptly, for Victoria had risen, and was glaring at him like a demon.

Come what would this farce, which was only wasting time, must end. What did the villain mean by telling her story to the man they were just about to murder between them?

"Dry up now," muttered she between her teeth, "and to your work."

"I'm under orders," returned he, quailing before her. "Must go—curse it!"

At last the woman understood all; her brother thief had sold her, had turned traitor. Stay! another thought struck her. Mother Mouser, who was always a screw, had put him up to give her this horrid fright, intending him to stop just short of the actual exposure of her name, expecting that she, in her alarm, would offer them the whole of the plunder rather than risk discovery.

Inspired by this belief, she now muttered to him in a burst of indignation:

"Ye idiot, if ye wanted all the swag, couldn't ye tip the wink, and be done with it? Much good may your patter bring ye, for how much can cold meat blab of what it hears?" her excitement offering her no more elegant choice of words.

A fearful blaze shot from the eyes of Gerald Trauers as he heard the vile jargon flowing from the lips which so often he had kissed.

"Fiend!" he hissed, towering over her; "cover your vile face and be dumb!"

For answer she laughed tauntingly, and advanced with shameless countenance uplifted.

But again she paused midway, gazed with pulsating eyes out of the low French window, turned cold and white as if blasted by the icy breath of death.

There stood Anthony Dare—her Anthony whom she was dreaming of night and day; for whom she would embrace her hands in blood. Oh, if he should guess her villainess now!

Why was he there among the roses, gazing straight at her, beckoning, smilingly?

In an instant her course was taken. She produced her handkerchief, made one rapid signal, and wiped her quivering lips with it.

Meantime Long Tom, also with his red, watery eyes fixed upon the lion-tamer, and, with the accent of a beaten hound, went on:

"I'm most through now, sir, and I know you've seen the connection of my little story with you long afore this. That girl's real name was Virginny Wesselhoff—Yellow-top we used to know her by, and the gent's real name—"

With a rush, sudden, silent as a cat, she sprang forward and caught Long Tom by the wrist.

As she did so, her great globular eyes flashing green, a gasping cry broke from the villain—he shook her off with a tremendous jerk and looked at his wrist.

A small red puncture was visible, from which one drop of blood oozed.

He uttered a frightful yell.

"I'm a dead man!" shrieked he. "She's poisoned me!"

"That's your pay, my fine cove!" said Victoria. "Now blow the gaff at your leisure."

Then she fixed her murderous glare on Gerald and seemed about to leap.

"D'ye think you're to get off, Mr. Gerald Trauers?" said she, scornfully. "No, it's too late a day for that! I vow you don't get out of this room alive!"

She bounded toward the door, striking at him as she passed.

## CHAPTER XXX.

GERALD was ready for her. With a rapid movement he swooped upon her, caught the uplifted hand and tore from it the mysterious weapon.

"Stab her all over with it!" yelled Long Tom, who was sucking his wrist with frantic energy. "She's given me my death—curse her!"

The woman screamed and struggled madly, her eyes glanced despairingly through the window to see if Anthony was coming.

Long Tom had fallen near it, but was gnawing his wrist with his teeth, even while with his other hand he was beckoning the figure in the garden to come closer.

In her wild despair lest Anthony should come and hearing Trauers's story, should strike her dead, she writhed away from the hand that held her, even though the grasp was of iron, and, dashing through the doorway, she locked the door behind her.

One moment she stood on the front doorstep wildly waving Anthony back—the next she had flown up to the chambers above.

She stood in the midst of her sumptuous apartment, her teeth set in her lip, her hands clenched, her form shaking with ungovernable fury.

What were the woman's thoughts in that sublime moment of her plot's defeat?

"I'm done for as sure as fate!" she was saying to herself. "My pals have thrown up the game and me with it. Trauers is unhurt and can have me hanged for murdering Long Tom before his eyes. There's Tony on the edge of sighting the whole plot. Am I to lose all? No, I'll have my share of the plant and 'Tony too.'"

With a hiss of malicious triumph she unlocked the casket of magnificent jewels that Gerald had presented to her and secured the contents about her person.

Then she swiftly searched his room, and possessed herself of all the money she could find, which indeed happened to be a very large amount, as the bridal expenses were expected to be considerable.

Then she took the false will, which had cost her so much trouble to procure, gaze at it longingly—almost thought she would take it too, but was forced to acknowledge to herself that it never could

bring her any luck, on the contrary might be her ruin.

(To be continued.)

## RUINED.

"THE man is ruined—hopelessly ruined!"

The words startled me.

"So bad as that?" said the individual to whom the remark was made.

"Even so bad."

"Of whom are you speaking?" I ventured to ask.

"Of Jacob Atwood."

I started to my feet.

He was one of my old, intimate and long-trying friends.

"Ruined, did you say? That man ruined? Impossible!"

"There is no doubt of it. I received my information from those who have the best right to know."

"What has he done?" I asked, eagerly.

My question was received in silence, as if the meaning was not clearly apprehended.

"Is he a defaulter?"

"No."

The answer showed some surprise at my question.

"Has he betrayed an honourable trust reposed in him by his fellow men?"

"No, sir; his integrity is without question. In all his public relations he was true as steel to principle."

"What then? Has he placed any portion of his property beyond the reach of creditors who have just claims upon him?"

"He has given up everything—even to the furniture of his house. Not a shilling has been retained and he goes forth into the world a ruined man."

"Oh, no," said I, speaking out warmly; "not in any sense a ruined man. The merchant may be ruined, but thank Heaven the man is whole."

The little company looked at me for a moment or two, half in surprise.

"The man is all right," I went on. "Only the scaffolding on which the workmen stood who were building up his character has fallen. Erect, calm, noble, half-divine he stands now in the sunshine and in the storm. Around his majestic brow the clouds may gather; upon it the tempest may beat; but he is immovable in his great integrity."

Some smiled at my enthusiasm. To them there was nothing of the moral sublime in the ruined merchant.

Others looked a little more thoughtful than before, and one said, feebly:

"There is something in that."

Something in that!

I should think there was. It was the first intelligence I had received of my friend's worldly misfortune and it grieved me.

In the evening I went to see Jacob Atwood. The windows of the elegant residence where he had lived for years were closed.

I looked up at the house—It had a deserted aspect.

I rung the bell; no one answered to my summons.

I could not repress the feeling of sadness that came over me.

The trial must have been severe even for a brave heart like his.

"I must find him," said I.

And I did find him; but far away from the neighbourhood where merchant princes had their palace houses.

The house into which he had retired with his family looked small and mean and comfortable in comparison with the elegant abode from which he had removed.

I rang and was admitted. The parlour into which I was shown was a small room and the furniture not much better than we often see in the houses of the well-to-do mechanics, or clerks on moderate salaries. But everything was in order and scrupulously neat.

I had made only a hurried observation, when Mr. Atwood entered.

He looked somewhat careworn—his face was paler than when I last saw him, his eye a little duller, his smile less cheerful.

The marks of trial and suffering were plainly visible.

It would have been almost a miracle had it been otherwise.

But he did not exhibit the aspect of a ruined man.

He grasped my hand warmly and said it was pleasant to look into the face of an old friend. I offered him words of sympathy.

"The worst is over," he answered, with manly cheerfulness, "and nothing is lost which may not be

regained. I have found the bottom, know where I am, and there is strength enough left in me to stand up securely among the rushing waters. The best of all is, my property, which has been apportioned to my creditors, will pay every debt. That gives my heart its lightest pulsations."

"I heard that you were ruined," said I, as we sat talking together; "but I find that the man is whole. Not a principle invaded by the enemy—not a moral sentiment lost—not a jewel in the crown of honour missing."

He took my hand and, grasping it hard, looked into my face steadily for some moments. Then, in a subdued voice, he made answer:

"I trust that is even so, my friend. But there were seasons in the worse than Egyptian night through which I have passed when the tempter's power seemed about to crush me. For myself I cared little for my wife and children—everything. The thought of seeing them go out from the pleasant home I had provided for them and step down, far down, to a lower level in the social grade, half-distracted me for a time. For them I would have braved everything but dishonour. I could not stoop to that. And so I passed a fiery ordeal and came out, I verily believe, a better man. No, no, my friend, I am not ruined. I have lost my fortune, but not my integrity."

And so the man stood firm. It was not in the power of any commercial disaster to ruin him.

The storm raged furiously; the waves beat madly against him; but he stood immovable, for his feet were upon the solid rock of honour.

D. J.

## MYSTERY OF THE MILL.

### CHAPTER XVII.

THE marriage laws of Baden, at the time of which we write, were established by the church—or, at least, custom had given to the church an entire control of the marital consummation. There might be betrothals, with various social and festive ceremonies, with which the law of custom had only to do; but when the sacred knot had been tied only death or the church could untie it.

In the case of the maiden of tender years her assent was not necessary to the nuptials. Her father or her legal guardian could answer for her. The will of the guardian in the matter was absolute; and when once the solemn fiat of the ordained priest had gone forth the maiden had become a wife beyond her power of withdrawal.

In fact, children seldom entered into the marriage contract on their own account; and especially in the case of the daughter was it the almost universal custom for parents to select the husband; and, throughout Germany, so long had this custom been the law, that the females verging towards the marriageable age patiently awaited the decision of their legal guardians, and as patiently submitted when the decision had been announced.

Of course there were romantic episodes of love and rebellion, but the maiden who loved against the will of those in authority over her must fight and conquer if she would win her heart's desire.

Pauline knew the law, and knew that she was at her guardian's mercy unless a saving hand could be outstretched. She knew that the priest of Offenberg had come to marry her to Caspar; and the morrow had been fixed for the dreadful consummation!

Long after she had retired to her chamber she heard Jacob and Caspar and Father Tobias talking below.

She had thought of flight, but Fenella had warned her not to attempt it, and had succeeded in making her understand that such a course would be attended with more difficulty and danger than would be the awaiting of events in the house.

Sabbath morning dawned, and with the first break of day Fenella came to Pauline's room finding the girl, with pale cheeks and swollen eyes, sitting by the little window, gazing out upon the forest.

"Fenella!"

"Hush, my child, and listen. I must say one last word. I have heard Jacob moving below, and I may not have opportunity to speak again before the ordeal comes. Remember what I told you last night. If we can put off the ceremony till afternoon, succour may arrive. I feel confident it will not fail us. And to this end you must not cross your guardian. You know full well that opposition to his will on your part can be of no avail. If you would second the efforts I have already made in your behalf, you must be the very bravest you ever were. You must appear to submit, and only ask for time—ask till towards the close of the day. Pauline, can you do this?"

"But, Fenella, if that time should come and the succour did not arrive?"

"That must be no part of our thought. It will come! And now—can you try and be brave, and do as I have said?"

"Yes, I will try."

"And if you try, keeping the end in view, you will—"

The housekeeper's speech was suddenly stopped by the opening of the door and the appearance of the priest. Fenella regarded him with astonishment and indignation, while Pauline crouched away with a cry of terror.

"I pray you, ladies, pardon me," said Father Tobias. "I have lost my way. I heard your master moving below, and thought I would join him. I thought this was the way to the kitchen. I shall never make the foolish mistake again."

And with this he withdrew. Fenella was not sure that he had not honestly blundered in upon them as he had professed. But she dared not tarry longer. She spoke a few more words in a hurried whisper, to encourage the half-stupefied girl, and then descended to the kitchen, arriving but a few moments behind the priest, who had only had time to ask for drink.

Caspar was up by the time the water in the kettle was boiling, and when the three men had partaken of the hot beverage (which the housekeeper brewed for them) they went out into the fresh air, where they remained until breakfast was ready.

After breakfast Jacob summoned Pauline into his private room and bade her be seated.

Perhaps he meant that the look upon his face should be stern and authoritative; but it was simply one of the least dogged determination mingling with which was a consciousness of triumph.

Our heroine sank into a seat, as she had been bidden.

She had been looking for this, and had summoned all her strength to meet it.

Was it possible that such a scheme of iniquity could prevail? And would the powers of Heaven suffer so base a man to triumph in his cruel wickedness?

An unseen spirit seemed to whisper to her that if she were strong it might not be so. Fenella's solemn assurance must certainly be based on good grounds. Not yet would she despair.

"Pauline," said the miller, regarding her steadily and speaking slowly and distinctly, "I think you know why I have called you hither and why a priest is here in his sacerdotal robes?"

He paused, as though he would give her an opportunity to reply; but as she remained silent he went on:

"Of course you know what the cherished plan of my heart has been. I have told it to you. It is a plan which is to be this day consummated. There is no need of many words at this time. I will simply inform you that the priest has come to make you Caspar's wife. Let me hope that you will show your good sense by generously yielding to the inevitable."

Another pause, and the maiden knew she must speak.

"Of course," she said, "your will is law; but you remember what I told you when you spoke to me first upon this subject. I do not love Caspar—I can never love him. Will he take such a wife?"

"Ay, that he will, right cheerfully, and teach you to love him in the future. So, my child, let us have it done with at once. Make yourself ready as soon as you can, for the priest may not wish to tarry."

"Father Tobias will not go away to-day?" Pauline said, with a steadiness that surprised herself. "This comes suddenly upon me. If you would have me appear myself, you must give me a little time."

"How mean you, girl? What time do you ask?"

"At least till afternoon; and I could wish that it might be delayed until evening."

"It shall be this afternoon, Pauline. You shall have till then. Oh, we will make you very happy. You cannot imagine what a lady you will be. None in Offenberg will be richer. Now go, and make ready. Be kind to Caspar and he will repay you, be sure."

Jacob was evidently agreeably surprised by the quiet and docile manner in which the girl had received the announcement of the approaching nuptials and these last words had been spoken cheerfully and with a smile.

Pauline did not wait to hear more and her guardian did not offer to detain her.

It had been the custom of the miller to have his dinner at noon, or as soon thereafter as might be; but on this Sabbath day, with the priest for company and in view of the importance of the occasion, the housekeeper had planned for a sumptuous repast and

it was full too hours past noon when the meal was ready.

If Jacob had fretted and stormed at the delay, he seemed to feel amply repaid when he beheld the tempting display spread upon the board.

Nearly an hour was spent at the table and when they had arisen therefrom Jacob bade his ward to go to her room and prepare for the marriage ceremony.

She must not be long.

Fenella cleared the table with all possible despatch, and then went up to her chamber, which had a window looking out over the piazza, and far down the forest road.

As she stood gazing out Pauline came in. Just then the voice of Jacob was heard calling at the foot of the stairs.

"Go! go!" cried the housekeeper in breathless excitement. "Our messenger is surely coming. Go at once, and ask them to wait for us. Say I will be ready presently."

Pauline went down, hardly conscious of what she did.

The priest was there, full-robed, with the book of rituals in his hand; Caspar was there, dressed in his best; and Jacob was there, the shadow of anxiety upon his face giving place to a gleam of triumph as he saw his fair ward enter.

"Where is Fenella?"

"She is coming presently."

And presently she came, and almost at the same moment the sound of bells was heard without.

"If it is a man on business," cried Jacob, testily, "let him wait. I have no friends who would call to-day. Go on with the ceremony, holy father."

But the holy father did not go on. Instead thereof he let the book fall by his side, and muttered to himself in Latin:

"He had seen through the window the garb of the man who was in the act of alighting from a mule."

In a moment more the outer door was unceremoniously opened, and there entered into the kitchen the coarse-robed, rope-bound, skull-bearing presence of a Monk of La Trappe.

He was an elderly man, tall, gaunt and bashful, whom the saturnal garb of his austere order most fittingly became.

"Memento mori!" pronounced the new-comer, crossing himself.

It was a part of the Trappist creed to keep the thought of death ever uppermost in the mind, and the only salutation by which the brethren greeted one another when meeting was the ghostly sentence just spoken.

And, having thus spoken, he cast a quick, searching glance around upon those assembled.

Fenella caught Pauline by the arm and drew her back.

Caspar gazed upon the sombre figure with open-eyed astonishment; Jacob was no less astonished, but added thereto was a quaking of fear; while Father Tobias, quivering at every joint, gasped for breath and slunk back against the wall.

When the monk had surveyed the assembly, allowing his gaze to rest longer on the stricken girl than upon the others, he turned to the crouching priest.

"Adam Kumper," sometime called Father Tobias, he said, with grave austerity, "His Grace the Archbishop Clement hath charged me with a message to be placed in thy hands. Read it, and I will then give to thee his word to be spoken by mouth."

Thus speaking, the monk took from his scrip a folded paper and handed it to the priest. The latter opened it with trembling hands and when he had read its brief contents he turned paler than before. He gave a second glance at the signature and the seal upon the instrument, and then looked up at the Stygian face of the monk.

"Oh, miserabilis! My holy office is taken from me!"

"Yes, Adam Kumper—and the priestly name thou wilt no more bear; the priestly robes thou wilt no more wear; nor shalt thou henceforth speak in the name of our Holy Church until his grace shall remove the ban. Hear and beware! Thou knowest the penalty of disobedience."

"Good brother, what have I done to incur the displeasure of the archbishop?"

"Clement doth not cast his secret counsels to the winds. If thou wouldst know more, thou must ask him. It is not impossible that by much fasting and prayer, and by just penance in our Monastery of St. Jean, thou mayest regain thy lost position. Give me now thy robe and chasuble."

With quivering lips and trembling hands the broken priest disrobed himself and gave the sacerdotal garments to the monk.

He was downcast and chagrined, but it was plain to be seen that his anger was rising.



"Thus," concluded the monk of La Trappe, throwing the robe and chasuble over his arm, "my duty is done. Remember! Remember!—and beware!"

And with these words, spoken as from the depths of the tomb, the saturnal visitor turned and departed, and shortly afterwards the tramp of his mule sounded in the distance.

Jacob Mordner was the first to break the dead and oppressive silence which followed the monk's departure.

"Father Tobias, what does all this mean? What nummery has that ghost-like monk been putting off upon us?"

"Wait, wait—let me think," said the priest, he turned to the wall, and bowed his head upon his hands, in which position he remained for some minutes. When he again looked up his features were set and rigid.

"Jacob, I would not see this alone."

"But—cannot the ceremony go on?"

"Not at this moment. Let it be as I have said, and I will explain."

As soon as he could content himself, Jacob sent the women to their rooms.

"May not my son remain?"

"I should prefer to speak first with you alone. Bide that you consider your child's best."

So Caspar went out of doors.

He obeyed the command, but not without a few muttered objections on the way.

"Give me a hint," cried the priest, when they were alone. "This thing has unsettled me."

"The priest has said so."

The young man's face was flushing, and his gony hands were slowly clasped.

"Jacob," he said, "you have nursed a viper in your bosom, and I am a traitor under this roof. This marriage, which I can officiate, is stopped. This child is a spoiled child."

"Supposed you," repeated the priest, in a voice.

"And you cannot say the words that shall make Caspar and Pauline man and wife?"

"The penalty of such a deed would be worse to me than death. No, Jacob, I cannot do it. I am no longer in holy orders."

"But the traitor?"

"Eh, my son. Let us be calm and circumspect. Is your housekeeper, Fenella, acquainted with any priest hereabouts?"

"Ay," answered the host, with a gasp—"she is intimate with Father Jerome, of Oberkirch."

"Ha! there we have it!" cried Tobias. "Jerome and Clement were classmates and chums in college and are now warm friends. Did this woman know that I was coming hither?"

"Yes—I told her."

"When?"

"On the morning of the day before yesterday."

"And she knew for what you had called me?"

"Yes."

"Has she been to Oberkirch since?"

"Yes, she went on that very day. Ah! how eager she was to go!"

Jacob had not answered these questions promptly; he had been reflecting, and the bitter truth had been dawning upon him.

"Then," pursued Tobias, "he sure she saw Father Jerome and sought his aid. He had plenty of time to send a messenger to Freiburg, and—he did it. This morning, Jacob, I heard you moving and I rose to join you. As I crossed my threshold I saw your housekeeper entering the girl's chamber. I went to the door and listened, and I heard the woman promise your fair ward that help should come. Something was said, too, about having the marriage ceremony delayed till afternoon. I opened the door and entered as, though I had blundered in accidentally, and found them locked in each other's arms."

The truth was now clear to Jacob Mordner, and he blamed himself for a dot that he had not opened his stupid eyes before.

With a fierce exclamation he sprang to his feet, and would have rushed up the chamber stairs had not Tobias caught him by the arm and forcibly detained him.

"My son, you still cling to the plan of making this girl your son's wife?"

"Ay—so to my life!"

"Then let us retire to a more secure place. Hush! not another word here."

Jacob led the way to his own sleeping-room, and when the door had been closed upon the pair the suspended churchman resumed, in a manner which told that he had considered his subject well:

"I must not remain here long, for that Trappist monster will not go far away until he has seen me clear of your house, and, in truth, there is no need of many words. If you are determined that this marriage shall be consummated, I can help you to it."

"Ha!—you can?" And in his eagerness Jacob clutched the priest by the arm.

"Yes."

"But I would have it done at once."

"It may be done within four-and-twenty hours. But you must be circumspect. Above all, you must not let your housekeeper know that you suspect her. Give her to think that her plan has entirely succeeded. Act as if the marriage were off, for the present, at least. Can you do this?"

"If you can show me how I am to profit there-by—yes?"

"Then look ye," said he who had borne the sacerdotal name of Tobias, spreading out his soiled palm, and pressing a finger upon it—"give me fifty golden Napoleons, and I will send to you a priest, in full canonical authority who will perform the marriage ceremony at your bidding. He shall come to you in disguise, and, if you can wait so long, he had better come after midnight. I know my man. For the sum you were to pay to me, if I can give him promise of it, he will do anything short of cutting his own throat."

"But," stammered Jacob, "do you mean that I must give him twenty golden pieces and fifty to you besides?"

"Never! Here I not lost my sacred office in your service? I failed, if you—"

"Enough," interrupted the miller. "I will give both sums. Send me the priest."

"He shall arrive here within an hour, after dark on the morrow—"

"Oh! if he could be to-night!"

"Ah!" cried Tobias, with a start, "it can be so. I can reach Oberkirch in an hour and a half."

"And," added Jacob, in a wild, enthusiastic "yes," "priest, if you send him off at once, can reach there before morning's dawn!"

"Ay, my son—on your word. Give me the gold, and I will be ready on the way. I pledge you my sacred word that it shall be as I said. I shall send to you Father Simon, a man who will serve you, and whom you may implicitly trust."

Jacob did not stop to consider longer.

He went to his own desk, or cabinet, and took out a leather bag, from which he counted fifty pieces of gold.

The priest took them with eager greed, and transferred them to a pouch which he was suspended from an inner belt.

"And now, Jacob, be cautious, and bid your son be cautious. Father Simon shall come secretly. Let the marriage be consummated, and after that you can deal with your traitorous housekeeper as you please. Be sure when Simon hath spoken the words which would have spoken the capital work will be done beyond the power of man to undo it!"

The ousted priest drew another draught of gin, and shortly afterwards mounted his stunted mule and rode away.

## CHAPTER XVIII.

WHEN left alone Jacob mixed a glass of gin and hot water and sugar, which he was stirring reflectively when Caspar came in and fiercely demanded to know why the priest had gone.

"Easy, my son. All is right. Come to my room and I will explain."

Caspar furnished himself with a steaming glass and followed his father.

And there, over his toddy, the grave question was discussed.

The miller told the whole story of Fenella's treachery and of the promise that Tobias had given. At one time Caspar would have bounded away and trampled the woman in her chamber, but his father held him back.

"She must not know neither by word nor look that she is suspected. Father Simon will arrive an hour after dark. The woman will suspect nothing. I shall summon them to the kitchen, where the priest will be in readiness, and on the instant of Pauline's appearance you will grasp her hand and the ceremony will be performed. I shall answer for my ward in person."

"Will you have Fenella come?"

"Yes—Pauline will answer my summons the more readily. I shall not call her, but she can come if she pleases. She will know when she looks into my face that her treachery is discovered, and by St. Michael, if she dares to open her mouth it shall be the worse for her! But she will not dare. She will see that the game is lost to her and terror will hold her quiet. Oh! the game is all our own and we have only to hold steady hands. Your part is not so difficult as mine. You have only to look grim and disappointed; and you can indulge in anger, if you wish. Really, your part is easy; but I must wear a smoother face. I must hide my bitter wrath from the traitress while I look her in the face. But I will do it. She shall

not know that I suspect until it is time for her to know all."

Caspar, now that he had come to understand the matter, looked so triumphantly radiant that his father was obliged to caution him.

"Donnerwetter!" cried the prospective bridegroom, starting to his feet and turning to the window which looked out over the mill towards the west, "the sun is not more than an hour high. In three hours Pauline will be mine!"

"Caspar, you will have to keep out of sight or the keen-eyed woman will read the secret in your face; and we cannot tell what hidden moves she has in reserve."

"Don't be afraid, old man—I will hold myself aloof save at supper, and there I'll nourish hatred and anger by shutting out the prospect of the future and thinking only of the past."

After this Jacob donned his long frock and went out to the mill.

Caspar, meanwhile, with a stout staff, walked in the garden and towards the forest.

In the upper chamber, when the women had seen the deposed priest ride away, Pauline had asked what should come next and Fenella had answered, with solemnity:

"Let us pray that Paul may come next, my child. All has turned out well thus far. We will watch and wait, I must see the master's face before I can judge further."

When they finally heard Jacob and Caspar go out they descended to the kitchen and washed and put away the dinner dishes, after which Fenella turned her attention to the preparations for supper.

Pauline, quaking with untold terrors, sat by the window and gazed out over the distant forest.

Where was Pauline's thought? Would he ever come?

And, with her hands clasped upon her bosom, she called his name again and again.

By and by she saw her guardian coming up from the mill upon which he started up and hastened to her own chamber.

"Well, Fenella," said Jacob, taking a seat and wiping his brow, "the best-laid schemes of men may fail. Who could have anticipated such a termination for the day?"

The housekeeper turned towards her master without a tremor; but he was keen enough to detect the unvoiced closeness of her gaze—the sharp, quick, questioning gleam of her eyes—and he knew that she was false.

"What does it mean?" she asked. "I should judge that the archbishop had deposed Father Tobias."

"Exactly."

"And do you know for what?"

"Ah, I fear Tobias has been a sad dog. He would not tell me all, but I could guess that he had been fearing something of the kind for a long while. However, it doesn't so much matter, after all. To be sure, Caspar is terribly out, but he can't wait; and I tell him he will grow stronger with the waiting. And perhaps Pauline will become more reconciled by the time we call a priest who cannot be so unceremoniously snatched from us. We will have supper at the usual hour, Fenella. Our late dinner need not interfere."

With this Jacob went to his sleeping-room and removed his working frock, after which he joined his son, whom he saw approaching the house.

At supper, which was served just at the close of day, Jacob and Fenella conversed very much as though nothing unusual had happened, which, under the circumstances, was of itself certainly out of the usual course of natural events.

The miller detected that his housekeeper talked idly, as though her deeper thoughts were not in her words, while the housekeeper thought exactly the same of the miller.

Caspar sat gloomy and silent, as did Pauline.

When the meal had been finished and the evening's work done up, Jacob and his son sat down in the kitchen with their pipes, while Fenella and Pauline went upstairs.

The old clock in the corner ticked the seconds away, and the seconds ran into minutes, and the minutes into a full hour. It was almost nine.

"Can the priest fail us?"

As though in answer to the query a gentle tapping sounded upon the outer door.

Jacob took the lighted candle and went to answer the summons, and he found upon the piazza a man of rotund form, clad in smock-frock and leathern breeches, with a peasant's hat upon his head and a full bag upon his shoulder.

"How!" cried the miller, indignantly, "do you bring me a grist on the Sabbath?"

The stranger chuckled till his fat sides shook, and then a light broke upon Jacob.

"Are you—?"



[THE TERRIBLE MONK OF LA TRAPPE.]

"Oho! you were looking for some one, then. But let us go in, good sir."

"But—have you walked all the way?"

"No—I left my beast back in the wood. Tobias told me to approach cautiously."

"Ay—and you are truly Father Simon?"

"At your service, Herr Jacob."

The miller grasped his visitor's hand and offered to take his bag.

"No, no, my son—it is not such a grist as would suit your mill. I have a change of garments in here, and if you will conduct me to a retired place, I will presently appear in propria persona, when we can talk at our leisure."

Jacob conducted the new-comer at once to his own apartment, and left him there with a light, and ere long the man emerged into the kitchen so entirely transformed that the host could not repress an exclamation of astonishment.

He was a priest, sleek and rosy-cheeked, and clad in full and imposing canonicals.

"Father Simon!"

"Ay, my son, I am the man. I have come at the bidding of our most unfortunate brother, whom we called Tobias; and I may say to you that my tarry must be brief."

"How? Will you not accept our hospitalities for the night?"

"No, I must return to our convent before midnight. The archbishop's Trappist messenger is in Offenber."

"Well, good father, the work can be done as quickly as you please. You know what it is?"

"Tobias told me."

"You are to marry my son and my female ward. I am the girl's legal guardian and act with that authority."

"I am aware of that," said the priest, with a nod. "I did not come until I had assured myself that my work would be proper."

"Perhaps Father Tobias told you—"

"He told me that the girl's head had been turned by a French adventurer. I shall feel that I am serving her, and saving her, even though she will not see it."

"Good! You speak to the point, holy father. This is my son—Caspar Murderer."

Caspar came forward and shook hands with the priest. Then wine and gin were set out, and when the visitor had refreshed himself he suggested that he was ready for work.

"You will be prepared to commence the ceremony as soon as the couple are before you?"

"Yes I understand the emergency, and will ac-

commodate myself to it. And, Herr Jacob, you understand the price?"

"Twenty golden Napoleons."

"Ah, your memory is good. Suppose you give me the money now, and then there will be no delay to my departure after the ceremony is performed. And, my son, I think I could pronounce the service with more unction with bright gold in my pouch."

Jacob did not demur. He went to his old cabinet, and when he returned he brought with him the twenty pieces of gold, which were speedily transferred to Simon's secret pouch.

"Now, my son, let us proceed. The work shall be done without a flaw."

Jacob directed his son to stand near the foot of the stairs, so as to be ready to take the girl's hand as she came down, after which he lighted another candle, and having seen that the priest was ready with his book and crucifix, he went to the upper floor, where he found both Pauline and Fenella in the chamber of the latter.

"Ah, Fenella—and you too, my dear child—I am glad I have found you up. Do not be alarmed—there is no danger—nothing, I think, very serious, but one of Caspar's wounds has broken open, and I wish you would come down and apply fresh bandages. My hands are clumsy. Poor boy! his walk in the forest under such excitement was too much for him. You have cloth, Fenella, that will do for a bandage?"

"Yes."

The housekeeper went to a large bag which hung in her closet, and drew therefrom a piece of soft linen cloth, after which she and Pauline followed the master downstairs.

The thought of mischief had not entered their heads. They had not heard a sound of the arrival of a visitor, nor had any note of the conversation below reached their ears.

Caspar stood in the shadow, and was passed by the housekeeper unnoticed; but when Pauline came down, he stepped out and caught her hand.

"Caspar! You?"

"Yes, sweet one."

Fenella heard and saw, and stood transfixed.

"Ah, traitress! monster!" hissed Jacob, seizing her savagely by the arm. "I know you! I know who set the hound of the archbishop upon us! Dare to utter a word—show but a single sign of opposition—and I will throttle you as I would a hawk!"

The housekeeper cowered beneath the malevolent, tigerish gaze, and her heart sank within her. She could only groan in her bitterness of feeling—she could articulate no word. She saw the strange

priest, and comprehended the situation. She had prevented Father Tobias from performing the marriage ceremony, but she had not prevented him from furnishing a substitute.

"What do you think of it?" demanded Jacob, still holding her tightly and painfully by the arm, "Oho! you shall see the marriage, as I promised you. We have here a priest who is not stripped of his holy prerogative. You shall be a witness to the nuptials, and then we will see what reward is your due for the part you have acted in this matter. Oh! double-dyed monster! hypocrite! serpent!—breathe but a word—a syllable—of your pent-up hatred, and I'll choke you where you stand! You may approach, but beware!"

Meantime Caspar, holding the terrified girl tightly by the hand, had dragged her towards where stood the priest, with his open book and crucifix.

"Oh, no! no! no!" she cried, struggling with all her power to free herself. She saw the dark-robed priest and the fearful truth came crashing upon her. "Mercy! In Heaven's name, have mercy!"

"It is for you to have mercy," said Caspar, still dragging her on. He was not so strong, however, as he had thought, and the frantic, struggling girl might have broken from him had not his father come to his assistance.

"Peace, my child!" said Jacob, catching her arm, and almost lifting her from her feet. "The edict is passed, and you are this night to be wed. And I call on Heaven to witness that in this I do for you the best that I can. Come—the priest waits!"

She was borne forward, and without farther delay Father Simon commenced. He had got as far as:

"You, Jacob Murderer, as lawful guardian of this woman, do give her to be the wife of this man?"

And Jacob had answered in the affirmative, when the air was broken by another sound than that of the voices in the house.

Without was the sound of many hoofs, and a clanking and rattling as of spurs and sword-scabbards; and then came the sound of a voice commanding to halt and dismount.

With a malediction Jacob bade the priest hurry on. He was trembling at every joint, and great drops of perspiration were starting out upon his brow.

But Pauline had heard the voice from without, and a wondrous strength was given her. With one desperate effort she broke from both father and son and darted towards the door.

"Paul! Paul!" she cried from her bursting heart; and on the next moment she safe upon the bosom of her dear lover.

(To be continued.)





[THE MEETING ON THE BRIDGE.]

## REUBEN;

OR,

## ONLY A GIPSY.

### [CHAPTER IX.]

THUS far our story has meandered through pleasant valleys, like a simple stream which, sheltered by flowered banks and friendly trees, knows nothing of storm or adverse wind.

Hitherto our heroine has been but a smiling damsel, sheltered by a father's love, in the enjoyment of perfect health, and an almost unlimited wealth. She had never had a passion, did not know what love meant, saving what she gathered from its meaning from the few books of light reading in the old oak library of the Hall.

Sir Edward, having exhausted all liking for gaiety during the years of his minority, had never filled the Hall with visitors or parties, though the gates were never shut to the poor, and occasional dinner parties of the old fashioned type were given at regular intervals.

For years there had not been the sound of dancing under the vaulted roof and Olive's experience of balls was confined to those of the county, or the private ones which were sometimes given by friends.

She had not had a season in London, partly because Sir Edward liked to see her as she was, fresh, healthy, unsophisticated, pure, but totally unacquainted with the wiles and ways of the world, Olive was intellectually the superior of many a town belle; she had read much and thought more.

She loved and revered nature; was full of a simple trusting poetry which unconsciously tinged all her thoughts and even her manners, and was wont to declare that all men were equal before Heaven, and that deeds were more glorious than men.

It was owing to her peculiar training and self-culture that she had taken a fancy to Reuben, and that the fancy had possessed her so strongly that on the night after her conversation with him in the woods, that conversation which had so suddenly and strangely shown her a glimpse of the nobility of his soul, she had been unable to think of anything else.

Only of the tall, stalwart frame, so supple and graceful, and the grand, handsome face, so full of noble scorn and strength.

Miss Topsy Beamish, who was Olive's maid, and devoted to her beautiful young mistress, also unconsciously and innocently helped to keep the topic in Olive's mind.

"And how do you get on with your riding, miss?" she asked, as she curled the long silken hair and held it out at full length from the head, admiringly.

"Oh, very well, Topsy!" replied Olive, half-starting with a conscious glance at the glass, which showed her Topsy's innocent face, free from all guilt.

"And how do you like the new riding-master?" asked Topsy, who was privileged to chatter during her ministrations at the shrine of the toilet.

"Oh, very well," replied Olive again.

"He's a strange sort of riding-master, isn't he, Miss Olive?"

"Strange? In what way?" asked Olive, dreamily.

"Why, miss, riding-masters are always old and respectable like—"

"And is not Reuben respectable?" asked Olive, with a half-smile.

"Oh, yes, miss, for all I know—but those gipsies, they are such—he's a gipsy, isn't he, miss?" she broke off with.

"Yes," said Olive, "I think so."

"Well, miss, being a gipsy, of course he can't be altogether respectable, leastways, not respectable enough for a riding-master. Why, look at the grand gentleman who used to come from Taloot. I'm sure he was quite like a prince and when he used to ride into the stable yard and say 'Ah! er, is Miss Seymour within?' it used to put me and the cook into a flutter! and then to see him twist his moustaches so fast and fierce like, it was dreadful! and yet, miss, you enjoyed it, like! It was so haughty!"

"Haughty!" laughed Olive. "Poor Mr. Smithers! He couldn't ride a bit."

"And Reuben—Mr. Reuben, I beg his pardon, I'm sure!—he can?"

"Indeed he can," said Olive, quietly, but so emphatically that Topsy stared. "He can ride better than any man I ever saw."

"Lor', miss! you don't say so, and he only a gipsy!" said Topsy.

"Nonsense," said Olive. "How thoughtlessly you talk, Topsy! Do you think that because a man happens to be born a gipsy that he must be devoid of the use of his limbs or be without brains? A gipsy is a man—and—"

"A brother, miss," said Topsy, mindful of some sentiments she had heard her mistress express.

Olive laughed.

"Well, yes, a brother certainly, Topsy; but what

I meant to say was that you should not look contemptuously upon a gipsy. Supposing that you had been born in a gipsy camp instead of in the lodge—you could not have helped it."

"No, miss, certainly not," said Topsy, thoughtfully. "But you see—"

"There, there," said Olive, tapping her small foot impatiently. "Don't argue, but go on with my hair, I shall never get into bed to-night."

There was a minute's silence which Olive herself broke.

"What sort of characters do gipsies bear, Topsy?"

"Bad, miss," replied Topsy, solemnly. "Bad, very bad. They almost always steal, and sometimes they set fire to the ricks, and sometimes they steal the children."

"What for?" asked Olive.

"Who can tell? I have heard that they eat them sometimes; but of course, miss, that can't be true, though they are ugly and dark."

"Not all," mused Olive, her head bent, and thinking as her maid prattled on of handsome Reuben.

"No, not all, miss; look at Mr. Reuben, I'm sure he's as handsome as a Christian and as straight as a larch! Oh, miss, what a strange thing it would be—"

Then Topsy stopped.

"What would be strange?" asked Olive.

"I've been reading, miss, one of the books which cook buys of the pedlar, all about a footboy as turned out a prince in disguise, who was stolen from his parents in a washing-basket; suppose—"

"Well, suppose what?" asked Olive, smiling.

"Suppose Mr. Reuben should turn out to be one of those babies stolen by the gipsies, and be a prince in disguise, miss! Oh, my!"

"Nonsense," laughed Olive. "There, put down the brush, you silly little thing, and run away. I declare that you have talked me almost to sleep. Good night, and don't read silly books any more, Topsy. Good night."

And Olive stifled a yawn as the door closed on her faithful handmaiden.

Silly things will stay in the chambers of the brain longer than wise ones sometimes, and that night when Olive sought her pillow she dreamed that Reuben had come to her clothed in silk and armour and, smiling, had said:

"See, fair lady, I am no longer Reuben, the gipsy, but the Silver Prince!"

For a morning or two she did not ride—having to go with her father to pay some visits, and the second day had passed since she had seen Reuben,

who had been up to the stable-yard each morning to learn if they were wanted.

On the fourth Olive was awakened by Topsy who came into the room singing in a low voice as if she could not contain her joy.

"What is the matter, Topsy?" asked Olive.

"Oh, Miss Olive, just look at the morning!" replied the delighted girl. "Isn't it enough to make one's heart glad?"

It was indeed a lovely morning, and Olive lost no time in exchanging bed for bath; then, as Topsy arranged her hair and put the last finishing touch to the thick, silken braids, she said:

"What do you say to a run through the meadow, Topsy?"

"Delightful, miss!" exclaimed Topsy. "I'll go and fetch your cloak and shawl."

"Oh, nonsense!" laughed Olive. "Bring me that old sun-bat and the gray shawl—they will do. Do you want to melt me?"

Topsy brought the required articles, and Olive quickly investing herself in the way out, catching up a little basket as she went, for any stray primrose.

Across the meadows, then through the avenue, first skirting the wood, and as they stepped along briskly, revelling in the glorious sunshine, looked, mistress and maid, like flowers of gipsy in growth. The one a passion-flower, and the other a daisy.

"And now we ought to go back, miss, oughtn't we?" said Topsy, as Olive stopped on, apparently regardless of time.

"No, not yet," said Olive. "we will get down to the stream across this hedge, and go home by way of the garden."

Topsy, bound to obey at all times, silently acquiesced, and, gathering flowers as she went, followed in the steps of her mistress.

Presently as they passed the bridge, which was so permit them to cross the stream, Olive stopped, and held up her hand to Topsy.

"What is it, miss?" asked Topsy, coming up on tiptoe.

"Hush!" said Olive. "Listen! It has stopped for a moment. There!"

Then Topsy heard a man's voice break out suddenly into song.

It was a fine, musical voice, though one evidently quite uncultivated, and the words, which came now and then, waited towards them by the early breeze, were those of a song of Wordsworth's.

Olive listened, and her eyes grew dreamy.

Topsy was affected and crept nearer to her mistress.

"Doesn't he sing beautiful?" she whispered. "It's some gentleman staying at the inn. Shall we go on, miss?"

"No," said Olive, then changed her mind.

"It is too far to go back," she said. "But as go quietly and we may not disturb him."

So they went on very softly on the grass and gained the bridge.

There Olive stopped, and Topsy, apparently forgetful of the unseen singer, wandered slowly on, plucking flowers as she went.

Suddenly the song broke out again, and Olive was about to move away, when a figure emerged from behind some trees which had helped to hide a bend of the stream, and came slowly towards her, whipping the stream as he came with a fly-rod, and singing away.

He seemed utterly unconscious that his solitude had been broken.

Olive did not like to move.

She hoped that the gentleman would turn and go back without seeing her—he came on, however, and presently Olive saw that it was no strange gentleman, but Reuben, the gipsy.

For a moment she was startled.

At a little distance so graceful, so well-bred, had his figure appeared that she had taken him for a gentleman!

It was strange.

None of her father's labourers, none of the women about the estate could have deceived her so!

What was there about the young man which made her almost forget the low position which he held, and deem him worthy of a higher one?

As she leant on the bridge and thought and gazed at him, the song stopped abruptly, and with an exclamation of pleasure, Reuben commenced playing a fish which had snapped at his fly, and been snapped by the hook in return.

It was a large fish, and the stones and rocks being rather thick at that part of the stream, Reuben had no very easy task.

Three several times he brought the plucky, silver-skinned trout to the surface, and three times the fish had broken away again.

Olive, on the bridge grew interested and excited,

and as Reuben with beautiful art brought him to the net the fourth time, Olive bent forward and uttered an "Ah!" of mingled fear and satisfaction.

That "Ah!" nearly cost Reuben his fish, for he started, looked up and seeing the beautiful vision bending over him as it were that of a benevolent saint, lost for a moment all care of his game; the next, as Olive's clear voice rang out: "Take care!" he slipped the net under his fly, and raised him aloft.

Olive's face beamed, and she shook her head as Reuben lowered his rod, and uncovered his head.

"Good morning," said Olive at the top of her voice.

Reuben, rod in hand, came bounding from rock to rock towards the bridge.

"To it a fine fish?" she asked.

"Would you like to see it?" he replied.

"Yes," she said.

He stopped and looked up at the side of the bridge, under which he stood, then looked across at the others, and, before Olive could form any conception as to what he was about to do, he had fastened his fishing basket under his arm, and had plunged into the bubbling stream.

In silent wonderment Olive stood and watched him as he made his perilous way, sometimes reaching his long poles up to his breast, at others leaping from boulder to boulder.

Presently he stood at the foot of the bridge, and, making a short cut, he clambered up its rough side of piled stones and stood before her.

"Oh, dear!" said Olive, looking at his wild figure, and then, calm, serene face, "why did you not come round?"

"I should have kept you waiting, fair lady," he replied, simply. "There is the fish," and he held it out from his two hands.

"What a beauty!" said Olive. "And you caught him with that thin line! It's wonderful, is he dead?"

"Not quite!" said Reuben.

Olive put out a finger and touched the fish.

"Are you fond of fishing?"

"Fond of it?" he repeated. "Yes, I like it."

"It is a pastime?" said Olive, her one hand on the bridge, and her eyes fixed on his face, which was flushed, and so made more handsome than ever by his exertions.

"Trout are good to eat," he said, with a significant smile.

"And do you catch many of them?" asked Olive, blushing for pain that she had been so thoughtless.

"Not many; this is not a very good place," said Reuben.

"Where then?" asked Olive.

"Yonder," he said, half-nodding to the stream at the other side of the bridge.

"Why do you not fish there then?" asked Olive, raising her thick eyebrows with surprise.

"That is private water, and this is not," said Reuben.

"To fish there would be poaching."

"And you never poach?" asked Olive.

Reuben looked at her and smiled.

"Sometimes," he said, and then, added more quietly:

"It is hard to live and the gipsy must take his bread by stealth sometimes."

Olive shrank back with an inward feeling of pain.

"You do not steal?" she said, with a look of sorrow.

"Steal!" he repeated, his head erect, his eyes flashing. "Steal, lady, no! That is if taking a trout one bird from Heaven's water or Heaven's wood be not stealing!"

Olive beamed a sight of relief.

"Oh, you only poach," she said.

He nodded.

"But never there," he added, quickly and quietly.

"I have taken no fish, or bird, or hare from this place, fair lady."

"And why?" asked Olive.

"They are Sir Edward Seymour's," he replied, slipping the fish into the basket. "A blade of grass belonging to him is sacred to me! he has not given me kind words? Has he not treated me—has he not you?" he stopped, and Olive coloured.

"Forgive me," she said. "I seem fated to hurt your feelings and wound you! I ought to have known that you would not have done anything wrong at Disley. It is a beautiful fish," she said, braving off and eyeing it wistfully. "I should like to catch a fish like that."

"You would?" he said, raising his eyes quickly to her face. "Why should you not? Let me teach you—it is very easy. I am sure you would learn very quickly. See, I will get you the rod," and, before she could refuse, he had stepped over the bridge and was slipping down hand over hand to the stream beneath.

Olive watched him as he made his way to his rod, and then back again, and it was too late to refuse. It would have looked ungrateful.

"See now," he said. "If you will step down here—on this side—it is your own," and he smiled.

"I will show you how to throw the line—"

Olive hesitated, and looked round.

"You are looking for your maid," he said. "There she sits amongst her flowers; shall I call her?"

"No," said Olive. "If she is there, she will wait."

And she followed him down the little path to the other side of the stream.

There were more rocks there than on the other, and it was not safe footing at places. At one of these Reuben, standing beneath, held out his hand, and Olive, slightly inclining her head by way of thanks put her into it.

It was so firm, so steady, and she knew then the secret of the power which had waged war against her heart.

That hand, supple as a woman's, and nearly as soft, could bend a bar of iron, master a wild horse of Tartary, or throw a fly upon the water as lightly as if it had dropped from a bough.

"Strength and skill," combined have made the world," thought Olive, and this man, had fortune favoured him, might, in past ages, have been great.

Aided by that strong hand, she gained the foot of the stream, and then Reuben held his finger to his lip.

"We must not speak," she said, in a whisper.

"Why is that? You sang just now."

He smiled, and half-pleaded.

"I did not know any one was near and the fish, they do not mind that kind of noise. Now, lady, take the rod!"

Olive held it quite wrong and awkwardly, and Reuben was obliged to put her fingers into their right position.

It was a delightful task, and his heart beat quickly as he felt the soft, warm fingers pliant and obedient to his.

Oh, what a beautiful thing was a beautiful woman! Surely no bird in the heaven—and there were beautiful birds there—no star, nothing could compare with her.

Reuben had read of men who worshipped stars and had died for them.

They were far off, and no man could reach them, and yet these men had died for them; well, she was his star, farther off from him than the stars of heaven; he was never mad enough to dream that she could be anything to him, but if he could only have died for her that would have been happiness enough.

While these thoughts were running confusedly through his brain he silently showed her how to throw the fly so that it fell on the water to imitate the natural movements of an insect, and then, as Olive, with an aptitude which was occasioned by her anxiety to learn, gradually grew more successful in her attempts, he fell a little at the back of her, and, kneeling on one knee, watched the stream where the fly fell.

Suddenly he, with the noiselessness of a serpent, drew near to her side and pointed.

There was a slight stir in the quiet eddy, then a bubble, and presently a large fish rose and leapt out, falling back into the stream with a mighty splash.

Olive's heart beat, and her cheek flushed with excitement.

"Can I catch him?" she asked.

"Yes," said Reuben, in a whisper. "Throw the fly there—just where that little stone rises—no!" and he nodded with a smile as Olive, trying all her might, landed the fly where she wanted it.

It rested a moment, then there was a sudden swell of the water, and Olive felt a pull as if her arm was broken.

Reuben was on his feet in an instant.

"You have it!" he exclaimed, in suppressed delight. "It is a monster."

"But I can't hold it!" said Olive. "It will pull my arm off. Oh, dear, do take the rod!"

"No, no!" said Reuben, forgetting everything in his excitement. "No, no, fair lady, courage! Who gives in when victory is already there? Rest your rod against your side and hold like grim death."

Olive set her teeth hard and smiled.

"I am sure it will go," she said, panting.

"No," said Reuben, and he laid his hand upon hers to steady it.

This time his hand was hard, and she felt beneath its grasp like a child, powerless, helpless as a twig in a vice.

In his excitement and anxiety that she herself should catch the fish, Reuben unconsciously closed upon her tiny fist too tightly.

He hurt her, but, though her face went white with the pain, she determined not to speak. "Courage,"



he had said, and even in this little matter she would show him that a woman could be brave as well as a man.

With one hand she held on, loosening or tightening the line as he told her with the other, and presently she felt the line slacken and the strain lighten. Then Reuben stepped into the water with the net, and in an instant the fish was glittering inside its meshes, and Olive's prey was at her feet.

# CHAPTER IX.

Reuben, kneeling, looked up at her with a delight which he vainly strove to repress.

Then suddenly her face grew anxious and grave.

"Lady, are you ill?" he asked.

"No, no," she replied. "It is nothing."

"Give me the rod," he said, "and sit here for awhile."

She gave him the rod, and, as she did so, he saw her hand.

With an exclamation of remorse he dropped the rod and fish and stood before her, all grief and despair.

"Brute that I am!" he said, almost inarticulately. "I had forgotten that my wife's claws were coarse and hard, and I have hurt you, lady. I hurt you when I would die to save you from a moment's pain."

And as she sank on to a stone he knelt on one knee beside her.

"No, no," said Olive, laughing, but very faintly. "It is nothing—only a little pinch. Please don't mind it. Look at the fish! Oh, I am so glad you made me hold it."

"And I would rather that all the fish in the stream remained there for ever than that I should have hurt you!" he said.

Then, springing to his feet, he bounded to the stream, and, filling his cup with water, returned to her side.

"Let me bathe it, lady," he said, humbly, almost tenderly. "There is no medicine so powerful as cold water."

Olive smiled and held out her hand.

It was discoloured slightly, and Reuben as he touched it actually groaned inwardly.

With the gentleness of a woman he touched the hand, his eyes fixed on it the while, leaving Olive free to watch his face, which in its present expression of tenderness and regret was almost scrupulous in its beauty.

"What a wonderful nature it is," she thought. "So strong and self-reliant and yet so gentle and winsome."

A dangerous nature, had she but known it, for it is these natures that win love and hold it though all the rest of the world of change and chance are faithless.

A dangerous nature for a girl—inexperienced and innocent of her own heart—to play with. Like fire it might catch the spirit and claim it for its own, and then Reuben, the gipsy, would be lord and master, and Olive, the lady, be his slave.

No thought, no dread of love touched her as she sat thus.

It was pleasant, nay, delightful, to sit there in the sunlight, with a handsome human being tending her bruised hand with the gentleness of devotion.

It was delightful—the morning, the companion, the amusement; but love?

It did not enter her head that the man, the gipsy, at her side, might find it delightful also; and perhaps too delightful!

Suddenly a voice from the bridge startled them.

"Oh, miss, where have you been? I've been looking for you everywhere. Here's Sir Edward coming; thinking you are lost, Miss Olive."

As Topsy spoke Sir Edward stepped on to the bridge.

Reuben, who had already sprang to his feet, stood gravely ready for any course of action.

Olive was drying her pocket-handkerchief, and Sir Edward, leaning over, called out:

"Hallo! Poaching, eh?"

And he smiled with a queer expression.

Reuben raised his wet cap, and Olive looked up with her own smile for the fond father.

"Yes. What will you do with me?"

"Give you six months," said Sir Edward; then, nodding to Reuben, he said, "Where did you catch that, Reuben?"

"I did not catch it," said Reuben, with grim coolness, and a glance almost of pride at Olive who had risen and was looking up, with her hand shading her eyes to her father.

"I caught it, papa, I did indeed!" she said, laughing.

"What?" exclaimed Sir Edward. "You did? I did not think a woman was clever enough." And he came down to them. "Come, come, I suppose I must let you off this time. And who taught you, eh? Master Reuben, I presume."

"Yes," said Olive. "Of course I should not have been able to secure it but for his help." "And I suppose I must let him off on the same grounds, eh?"

And the good-natured baronet smiled.

"But it's poaching, young fellow, you know."

"No, sir," said Olive, quickly, almost eagerly, in a low voice. "He has caught none on this side of the stream, papa. Do not hurt his feelings—he has been so kind. You do not know how good and gentle and unselfish he is! I have spoiled his morning's amusement, and so," she added, in a whisper, "he is wet through. I had quite forgotten it!" she added to herself, remorsefully.

"Come," said Sir Edward, "I was too hasty with my pardon. You don't poach, my daughter tells me. That's right; I'm glad to hear it. And, as you haven't taken it in the French style, I give you leave to fish here when you like. Come, Olive, if you forget your breakfast, I'm too old to do so."

And taking Olive's arm on his left, his father walked away with her.

Reuben stood looking at the fish for a moment, then raised his eyes.

Olive was looking back.

"Reuben," she said, "you caught the fish, not I, after all. Will you accept it?"

He shook his head with a smile, and she, looking at him also to insist upon her gift, passed out of sight.

All the light seemed to go with her again.

When Reuben went up to the Hall, later on the same day, Olive appeared at the breakfast-room window and called to him.

"I cannot ride to-day, Reuben," she said. "I am sorry I did not know this morning, so that I should save you the walk."

"It is no trouble," he said, simply, then he looked at a basket which he held in his hand. "The fish are inside," he said.

"Not for me," said Olive.

"Yes, lady," he said, firmly.

"No," said Olive; then, seeing the look of grave disappointment, she stepped down into the yard and said: "Let me see them."

Reuben opened the basket, and Olive pointed to the fish.

"Will you give me the one you caught?"

"Yes," he replied. "Both."

"No," she said, firmly, and with a smile into his eyes that made them flash. "I will take that or neither. The other you shall take—there is no difference in the size. Why should you hesitate?"

"It is natural, lady, that you should like to have that which you caught."

"Not at all; I am unnatural then!" said Olive, and with a nod she stepped away.

Reuben gave one of the fish to a servant and disappeared.

Once in the woods again, he took his fish out of his basket and set to work as if for dear life.

He worked all day and then set it aside to be finished.

He meant to stuff Olive's trout and keep it to look at as a memento of that bright, happy morning.

"It is better than eating it," he said, grimly, as he dined off a crust of bread.

Over his life there was gradually creeping a subtle kind of glamour which he did not understand.

For him there existed only one place—the Hall; only one person—Olive Seymour, the mistress thereof.

Half the night he wandered through the wood, dreaming of that fair face which was as a star to him, so beautiful, so far away.

In the morning he was at the stream, but Olive did not come.

When he went to the Hall, he found everything in confusion, grooms running hither, maid-servants running thither.

He could get no answer from any one for some time, but at last Topsy appeared at a doorway and beckoned to him.

Reuben was at her side in a moment.

"Well, Mr. Reuben," she said, "and here's a pretty to-do, isn't there?"

"I don't know," said Reuben, "nothing has happened to—"

"Lord-bless the man!" retorted Topsy, gazing at him admiringly. "Why, his colour comes and goes like a girl! Happened—what should? No; all the fish is about a ball to-night at Lord Craven's. You know?"

Reuben shook his head.

"No! bless the man! why his lordship's place lies on the hill over Taloot way. Well, the ball's there—quite sudden like, all because his lordship has won a horse race—and we're going to it."

"You are?" asked Reuben.

"Not me, Mr. Reuben, but my dear Miss Olive and Sir Edward. And, oh, dear me! I'm quite broken-hearted!"

"What about?" asked Reuben.

"Of course you'll laugh!" said Topsy, pointing.

"But Miss Olive has set her mind upon wearing a new dress that came from Paris, and, there's a ribbon short—just a ribbon that she can't do without!"

"Ah," said Reuben, curtly. "And why don't you get it?"

"There's a man! as if ribbons were lying on the hedgerows! The nearest match to that ribbon is at the draper's shop in Woolney," added Topsy, very solemnly.

"And why do you not send for it?" queried Reuben, grimly, almost fiercely.

"Send for it?" retorted Topsy. "Who is there to send for it? None of these last fellows would go there and back in the time—and if they could, master nor Miss Olive would let them."

"What time does Miss Olive want the ribbon by?" asked Reuben, looking dreamily across the horizon—across where Woolney lay, far out of sight.

"Nine o'clock to-night would do," responded Topsy; "but there, what's the use of thinking of that? Miss Olive will have to choose another dress, bless her pretty heart!"

"No—she shall not!" said Reuben. "I'll fetch the ribbon—I'll fetch it and be back by half-past eight. Get me the pattern."

Topsy stared.

"Bless the man!"

Reuben turned upon her almost fiercely.

"Time is precious," he said. "Do you want your mistress to be disappointed? Fetch the ribbon."

Topsy said never a word, but bounded up the stairs, and Reuben walked to the stables.

In ten minutes he was out again, leading the horse he had ridden with Olive.

The animal seemed to know him, for he rubbed his nose against Reuben's sleeve and in other ways showed its fondness.

Impatiently Reuben stood, looking at the sun, until Topsy's light step sounded beside.

"What, already?" she exclaimed.

"Where is the ribbon?" he asked.

"Here," replied Topsy. "I've got it and haven't said a word to Miss Olive, or I know—"

"Quite right," said Reuben, and almost snatching the scrap of ribbon he hid it somewhere near his bosom and was gone.

That night, as the sun was sinking behind the woods of Deane Hollow, a horseman rode into the narrow path which led to the woods, and urging his horse by spur and whip, seemed by his impatient glances at the summer sky to be riding against time.

It was Reuben.

It had been a long, swift journey and was not yet ended.

Its speed had told both on horse and rider, the former, though he had been fed and rested, looked spent and weary, the latter, through whose lips no food had passed, was as erect and hard-set as when he started.

Only mentally had the race told upon him, and the pallor of his face, the slight twitching of the muscles at the corners of his mouth and the flash of his eye told of the fire of impatience which was burning within him.

With foam flecks flying from him as he went, the hunter made his way along the narrow path, until the façade of a large house appeared in view.

At sight of this the horse slackened and hung its head.

Reuben glanced at the house and at the horse, then with a sigh and a smothered ejaculation of annoyance, dismounted and left the road.

To the right of him he could see the small, red curtain of a village ale-house.

Directing his steps thither, with the bridle thrown over his arm, he called to the landlord to bring a mug of ale.

The man nodded, and, with a stare of curiosity at the dusty pair, went to execute this order.

Reuben took the mug and, making a cup of the palm of his own hand poured some of the ale into it.

This he offered to the horse, who drank it gratefully, and throw up his head with something like a human sigh of relief.

Very slowly Reuben repeated the draughts, until all had gone, then he paid the astounded landlord and walked away.

"Hi!" called the landlord. "Man first, beast afterwards; won't 'ee drink a dram 'o'esself?"

But Reuben shook his head, and was soon lost in the twilight.

The road lay past the large house and Reuben, who thought it wise to invest a few minutes in giving his horse a rest, still walked by his side.

As they entered the shrubbery which flanked one side of the park-like grounds voices struck upon Reuben's ears, which had been rendered extremely acute by his romantic journey.

With a dull curiosity, which was half-unconscious, all his soul being fixed on the one desire to reach his destination by this appointed time, he listened.

They were men's voices and they struck discordantly upon him, though he knew by the tone that they belonged to the class which the world dubs gentle.

"Yes, queer place," said the one. "Doubted queer, looks as if it has been neglected."

"So it has," said the other. "Belonged to another branch of the family, present owner's brother. Quite a fluke he had ever had it, you know; he wouldn't if the youngster hadn't died."

"Ah, I heard something of it," said the first speaker; "the youngster was our friend Morgan's cousin, of course?"

"Yes, by the way, what do you make of him?"

"It's not the thing to speak ill of your host—or his son, you know—but upon my word I think, to say the least, they are—What's that?"

"Oh, nothing; bird in the tree. By the way, I heard that things have not been going well with the father. He dabbles on the Stock Exchange, you know!"

"No! Does he, really? Well he looks like it. It doesn't matter to the young one of course, our friend Morgan will feather his nest."

"Will he?" replied the other. "How?"

"What, haven't you heard? I thought that all the fellows in the place knew it. He is to marry a certain heiress in the neighbourhood. Quite a genuine money bag, by Jove. Lucky dog, Morgan!"

"Is it possible?" said the other. "Some ugly parvona, I suppose."

"No; on the contrary, a fine, dashing—they say really beautiful—girl."

"Nonsense!" laughed his companion. "A beautiful girl could do better than marry such a snob."

"Hush, I'm sure there is something moving down there amongst the shrub."

"No, it's only a bird," said the other.

But it was not a bird. It was Reuben standing, there under a spell, with a horrible dread eating into his heart.

"Yes, it's a fact, strange as it may seem, why little Morgan half-boats about it—Hush, here he comes, he's out with one of the men looking for poachers; they are dead upon the poor devils about here, both of them, father and son."

"I know; but, I say, tell us the girl's name will you—I should like to know."

"Her name is Seymour—Olive Seymour!"

A sharp hoarse cry as if from a man mad with pain or insult rang from below them, like the firing of a pistol-shot.

Both the speakers started to their feet with shouts of warning.

There was a sound of horse's hoofs and a horseman rode out of the patch of shrubs into the path.

"Stop him, there!" cried one of the gentlemen.

"Stop him! a poacher! Stop him!"

The horseman did not seem to hear, but set spurs to his horse and sprang on.

Suddenly however two or three men darted from behind a bush and clutched at the horse's bridle.

Reuben pulled up for a moment and glared at them.

"Stand back!" he cried, gathering the reins together.

A derisive shout of laughter was the response and the next moment he was surrounded.

(To be continued.)

## EXILED FROM HOME.

### CHAPTER XXXIII.

"I SHALL die!" whispered Georgina, shrilly. "I shall die—I know I shall! Oh, why did we come here? Get me away, Marian—quick!"

Gwen raised her finger enjoining silence. Then she called, in a clear voice, that trembled in spite of herself:

"Who is it? Who called to us?"

A strange, moaning, blood-curdling cry, low and muffled though it was, came in answer. It was strangely prolonged, rising and falling, and having in it the inflection of mortal agony.

Georgina nearly fainted away at once.

Gwen came near dropping her lantern. She leaned against the damp wall, half-stupefied and bewildered.

"Perhaps you believe in ghosts now," whispered Georgina, half-spitely.

"It must be an owl," suggested Gwen, who knew nothing whatever about owls save that they frequent dark places and emit a mournful sound, "I am sure w as an owl!"

She called again, more clearly than before.

And back came that strange, muffled cry that might have come from the depths of a grave.

"Is that an owl?" asked Georgina. "Help me upstairs. If I see the ghost I shall die! Help me!"

"It is an owl!" said Gwen, pale, her eyes glowing. "It must be an owl. I don't believe in ghosts, Georgina!"

She approached her charge and put one trembling arm around her and the two set out to retrace their steps.

They had gone but a little distance when the sepulchral cry was repeated, far more faintly than heretofore.

Georgina replied to it by a shriek, and dropping Gwen's arm, fled like a deer into the blackness ahead.

And Gwen, bearing the lantern, ran after her, lest she should lose herself among the numerous passages.

Their good fortune led them back, after one or two deviations, to the great stone staircase and they flew up the steps in a very panic.

They did not pause in their flight until they reached the kitchen, where Georgina dropped upon a settle, gasping for breath.

Gwen set down her lantern and sank upon a chair, laughing yet trembling.

"It was an owl, Georgina," she exclaimed. "We are foolish children."

"We are not foolish!" cried Georgina, resentfully.

"You call a ghost an owl and stick to your belief in face of facts. It was a ghost—oh, great Heaven! what's that? It's the ghost again!"

A heavy tread was heard in the adjoining room and the next moment a stout figure appeared in the doorway—the figure of Lord Darkwood.

His fat, oily face was aflame with anger. His small, sinister eyes gleamed like those of a serpent.

He was the incarnation of rage and Gwen shrank away from him in a sudden aversion.

His mask had slipped aside, revealing something, in that unguarded moment, of his real character.

"What does this mean?" he ejaculated, looking from one to the other of the two girls. "Who took the keys of the ruins from my cabinet? What are you two doing here?"

"Oh!" cried Georgina, in relief. "It's not a ghost!"

"I desire an explanation!" exclaimed the marquis, angrily.

"We came, my lord," said Gwen, with that haughty sweetness of manner that compelled respect and deference, "to look through the ruins, as strangers, until lately, have been allowed to do. Georgina obtained the keys."

"Yes, I did," declared Lord Darkwood's daughter.

"I found them in your cabinet, father. I should have asked for them, only you weren't there, and the thing was of no importance. Only think! We have never been in the ruins until to-day, and we have heard the ghost!"

"The ghost!" echoed Lord Darkwood, leaning against the wall.

"Yes," cried Georgina, eagerly. "We were in the vaults below."

"In the vaults?" said Lord Darkwood, huskily.

"Yes," assented Georgina, "and we heard a groan or scream, or something. I say it was a ghost, but Marian says it was an owl. The idea of its being an owl!"

"Miss Myner has more sense, than you," said Lord Darkwood. "It was an owl. There is no such thing as a ghost. You have heard an owl—nothing more. If you persist in your childish folly, I'll send you to a convent. And now go back to your own quarters. Georgina, I positively forbid you ever to enter those ruins again unless I accompany you. Miss Myner, I shall depend upon you to keep your charge within proper bounds."

The girls hurried away together, and Lord Darkwood halted in the shadow of the wall, and looked after them with a strange and ugly smile.

Adjoining the Darkwood estate was a magnificent property, of several hundred acres, known as Beechmont.

It was divided, after the usual fashion, into farms, park, pastures, and meadows, all in the highest state of cultivation.

Its gardens were noted for their beauty and extent, its conservatories, green-houses, and forcing-houses were only inferior to those of Dunholm Castle.

Beechmont was a freehold estate, and had belonged to an iron manufacturer, who had torn down the old mansion that had been occupied by previous owners, and had erected in its place a villa of com-

posite architecture, marked by a profusion of windows—orient, bay, French, Gothic, and Catherine-wheel—all so arranged as to harmonize and to present a picturesque and charming whole.

The pavilions and colonnades of Beechmont were features of the place.

Its long walks under arching trees, its secluded galleries, its great stone entrance-porch, were all of marked interest and beauty.

The wealthy iron manufacturer, who had lavished a fortune upon this place—which had seemed perfect when he had bought it—had died some months before the accession of Lord Darkwood to his title and estates.

The iron manufacturer had left a large family of sons and daughters.

Under his will, it was necessary to divide the property into several portions, and, as frequently happens in like cases, not one of the sons could afford to keep Beechmont as his share. It was offered for sale, and had been in the market several months without having found a purchaser.

Now, Lord Darkwood had conceived the idea of purchasing Beechmont and adding it to his already overgrown estate.

His predecessor had not expended one-fourth his income during his administration of affairs, and a large sum of ready money lay in the Bank of England, subject to his lordship's call.

But considering the price of the property too high, he had affected indifference, had pretended to think better of the project, and had artfully advised those in charge to sell to some one else if opportunity offered.

These tactics met with an unexpected result. Mr. Sutton wrote to Lord Darkwood, informing him that another purchaser was in the field.

The marquis replied promptly that that device was too old and threadbare to deceive him, and that if any one else desired to buy Beechmont at the price fixed upon it, that person was welcome to it.

To his lordship's great amazement and chagrin, Mr. Sutton's reply to this letter was that Beechmont was sold, and that the new purchaser would enter into immediate possession.

This information arrived at Dunholm Castle a day or two after the events narrated in the preceding chapter.

The question that now agitated the soul of Lord Darkwood was this:

Who had bought Beechmont? Some speculator who desired to sell again at an advance, a retired tradesman, or some off-shoot of nobility with whom he might have become intimate?

He wrote to Mr. Sutton, and was answered that the new owner of Beechmont was a lady, that she was unmarried, and newly returned from India.

"A yellow Begum," said Lord Darkwood, discontentedly—"a stout, elderly woman, with a pet parrot and Hindoo servants, and a beak-nose and disagreeable ways! I wish I had fallen in with their terms!"

But in the course of a week, the agent of the new proprietor of Beechmont appeared at the mansion and engaged a staff of servants, and made ready for the home-coming of his employer.

And then Pietro, who was wont to hear everything, made the acquaintance of the agent in question, and came to his master with the information that the owner of Beechmont was Miss Norrissa, a young East Indian heiress, and that her father had recently died in India, leaving her a very great fortune, and that she had returned to England to spend the remainder of her life.

"And to marry!" added Lord Darkwood. "That follows, of course. I wonder if she is engaged? If not, she won't remain unengaged a long time, not if she were hideous as Medusa. With Beechmont at her back, and money besides in the funds, she can marry almost whom she will!"

"Why don't you enter the race, signor?" suggested Pietro. "The lady is young, rich, and well-connected. She will take her place in country society at once. She would not be a bad match, even for you."

"She is probably a perfect Gorgon, or she would not have been permitted to leave India unmarried," said Lord Darkwood. "But I have a positive longing to possess Beechmont. I'll see her, Pietro. I am not too utterly hideous. I may offer her a chance to become a marchioness!"

He waited in some impatience for the arrival of the lady of Beechmont.

She remained in London for a few weeks, and it was not until the latter part of March that she made her appearance at her country seat.

Lord Darkwood heard from Pietro of the extent of her establishment, the number of her servants, and that she had two Hindoo attendants, one male and one female, who dressed in English fashion, and who fairly worshipped their young mistress.

There was much other gossip, which Pietro gleaned



industriously, and to which the marquis did not disdain to listen.

"I will call upon her with my daughter," said Lord Darkwood. "It is only a mark of civility—an overture of friendship. Once I gain the entrée of Beechmont, I'll improve my opportunities."

Accordingly he proceeded to the school-room and interrupted the usual lessons to give his daughter an hour's instruction in the etiquette and ceremony of morning visiting.

The Lady Georgina was too young and untrained for the task required of her, but her father conceived it necessary that she should be accompanied to Beechmont by her, and after ordering her a special toilet for the occasion and duly training her for her part, he took her to call upon her new neighbour.

Miss Norreys was not at home—being absent on an excursion to Shrewsbury—and Lord Darkwood and the Lady Georgina Charteris left cards and returned home, both well-pleased at her absence.

"I will call again without this great awkward creature, with her silly, broad, good-natured face," thought the marquis. "The lady of my family has called—and the lady of my family can now retire into her proper background. I wonder why I could not have had a daughter like Miss Myner, whom I could have presented with pride. With my love of beauty, why was I cursed with a loutish daughter like this?"

He forgot that the Lady Georgina strongly resembled himself in personal appearance. She lacked his polish, his address, tact and ready politeness, and the lack of these was harder for him to bear even than the lack of beauty.

Early in April Miss Norreys acknowledged the attention of her neighbours by leaving cards at Dunholm Castle.

Lord Darkwood was absent when she called and the Lady Georgina was with Gwen, in the park, so that again the mistress of Beechmont was not seen by the inmates of the castle.

Lord Darkwood's curiosity concerning her was now at fever heat and he determined to call again upon her speedily and alone.

He had learned that her father, the late Mr. Norreys, was a government dignitary in India, that he had gone thither with a competence, and increased it into a magnificent fortune; that he had maintained a splendid establishment; that he had died suddenly, leaving his daughter his sole heiress.

Miss Norreys had wealth and family; she was young.

If it should turn out that she had also a fair share of personal beauty, Lord Darkwood determined to become her suitor.

His acquaintance with her was destined to be made under circumstances somewhat different from those he anticipated.

The Lady Georgina and her young governess were in the habit of riding daily, attended by a groom.

They generally rode through the park, sometimes through the village of Dunholm and even to Shrewsbury.

Both were fond of exercise. Gwen was a skilful horsewoman and taught her pupil with unusual success, although it must be confessed that the dumpy figure of the Lady Georgina did not appear to advantage upon a horse.

One bright April morning, the two girls determined to extend their ride to Shrewsbury. The horses were brought around and then it was discovered that the horse that Gwen had used heretofore had fallen lame and that another horse had been substituted in its stead.

The substitute was a handsome thoroughbred, with a thin, arched neck, a small head, and a wicked, restless eye.

Gwen patted him gently. He seemed restive.

"Is he safe?" inquired the Lady Georgina of the groom. "I don't like his looks."

"He is perfectly safe, my lady," was the answer. "My lord has ridden him several times, and said only yesterday that Bonniel was a lady's horse."

"I am not afraid of him," said Gwen. "How beautiful he is! I like a horse of spirit!"

She mounted him lightly, settled easily into her saddle, and rode down the avenue, accompanied by the Lady Georgina, and attended by the groom.

The horse answered to her gentlest touch, and was presently under her full control.

There was a delight to fearless Gwen in the possession of an animal so spirited and nervous, and she enjoyed the ride, the warm spring air, and the pleasant April sunshine.

They crossed the park, rode through the village of Dunholm, and cantered upon the pleasant country road beyond.

For some distance the Darkwood property

stretched beside them on either side of the road, but finally the Beechmont Manor came in view.

"I should like to see Miss Norreys," said the Lady Georgina. "It must be a fine thing to be rich as Croesus and your own mistress, don't you think so, Marian?"

"I should think it might be, but I can't answer from experience," said Gwen, smiling. "Beechmont is charming, but not so grand, of course, as Dunholm Castle."

"Of course not," said Georgina, loftily. "Miss Norreys counts her acres by hundreds. We count ours by the thousand. When I become mistress of Dunholm Castle, for I don't believe father will ever marry again, I shall rival Montmore—the Rothschild place, you know—and all the finest houses in the kingdom. I wonder," added the girl, suddenly, "why Miss Norreys don't marry. If I thought she would entrap my father, I'd hate her!"

"Lord Darkwood may marry some day, Georgina," said Gwen, gently; "but his wife will be your friend, not your rival and enemy."

"She will not be my friend!" cried Georgina, flushing. "Don't speak so to me. My father shall never marry. I don't care for his love, but I do care for Dunholm Castle, and its grand belongings, and I mean to be mistress there. At first I didn't like it—I was used to a wild, free sort of life—but now the attentions of servants, the great, luxurious rooms, and the fine clothes are necessary to me. Six months have changed me so, Marian, that I hardly know myself. I prize now what I used to despise, and I should be miserable now where I used to be happy!"

Gwen made no comment; she knew that Georgina had told the truth.

The Beechmont park was enclosed in a tall iron fence, surmounting a low stone wall.

Nothing could be seen, from the highway, of the glades and dells and softly-shaded nooks within; of the red and fallow deer that browsed upon the herbage; of the pavilions and summer retreats that dotted the park—yet Georgina, for her perch in her saddle, tried to catch a glimpse of some of them.

They came to the great gateway, and the pretty stone lodge beside it, and unconsciously slackened their pace.

They saw a courtly avenue leading between two great lines of beech-trees to a stately mansion, a half-mile distant, with glittering windows and fantastic architecture—a splendid dwelling that seemed made for pleasure.

They rode on past the lodge, and, half a mile farther on, came abreast of a small, high, iron gate in the park wall.

As they neared it, the gate suddenly opened, and a lady rode out, attended by two grooms.

The lady's sudden appearance, the fluttering skirt of her habit, one or both together, startled Gwen's horse.

He sheered, reared, and flung her from the saddle, hurling her against the opposite stone wall, and dashed away at a gallop.

The Lady Georgina sat stupefied.

The lady, whose appearance had caused the accident, slipped from her saddle, ran to Gwen and bent over her.

The girl was insensible. Her pure, pale face, in its exquisite beauty, looked like the face of a dead person in its whiteness and immovability. Her head had struck the ground heavily, and the drops of blood were dabbling her bronze gold hair.

The lady signalled to her grooms. They alighted and hurried to her side.

"Wilson," she said, in a clear, rich voice, calm in spite of her alarm, "go to Dunholm for a medical man. Aga, carry this young lady up to the house."

Wilson, an Englishman in livery, mounted and rode away furiously.

Aga, a Hindoo, also in livery, gathered up the insensible girl in his arms and set out with a light tread for the mansion.

The Lady Georgina's groom, who had remained in his saddle in a perfect bewilderment, now came forward.

The lady said to him, in a tone of command:

"I will attend to the young ladies. You will do well to inform your master of the accident. State to him that the young ladies are at Beechmont, and that Miss Norreys will give them every attention."

We may as well state here that the groom, seeing that the runaway horse had halted in the distance, rode forward and secured him, and then hastened back to Dunholm Castle with the message that had been entrusted to him. And we may as well say, also, that Lord Darkwood was rather pleased than otherwise at the accident.

"Nothing could have happened better," he mut-

tered. "Now we shall have the entrée of Beechmont on quite a different footing from ordinary people. Miss Myner will interest Miss Norreys. If Georgina had tact and sense she might win this Indian heiress's heart. I shall be supposed to be greatly alarmed and excited, and will be excused if I hasten to the dear girls. I will order my horse and ride to Beechmont at once. Now, at last, I shall see my neighbour!"

#### CHAPTER XXXIV.

HAVING dismissed the groom, the lady approached the Lady Georgina, saying, with a gracious, yet haughty self-possession:

"I am Miss Norreys. If you will come with me into the house, I will try to make you comfortable, while I render your friend every attention."

"I am the Lady Georgina Charteris," replied the girl, superciliously. "And the young lady who is injured is my governess and companion, Miss Myner. I will go with you, thanks."

Miss Norreys bowed her head and approached her horse, vaulting lightly and gracefully into her saddle—a daring feat, that caused Georgina to open her eyes in wonder.

Then the lady led the way through the open gateway, Georgina following.

They rode along a winding path arched over by great beeches and gradually approached the mansion, the Hindoo, with Gwen in his arms, keeping in advance.

The Lady Georgina, as they proceeded, surveyed her hostess narrowly.

Miss Norreys was no Medusa, as Lord Darkwood had thought, but a young and magnificently beautiful woman, slender and graceful, with a haughty carriage and a countenance of majestic loveliness, if we may so characterize it.

She was a brunette, with a clear, pale olive complexion, with lips vividly scarlet and deep, soft, velvety, brown eyes, so dark that they seemed black, set under a wide forehead.

Her hair was very abundant and matched her eyes.

She was superb in her beauty, superb in her grace, superb in her manners.

She had the air of one used to command; but she had also a gracious sweetness very pleasant to witness.

"She would never marry my father," thought the girl, in relief. "She would never marry a stout, unhandsome sort of man!"

By the time this point of her reflections had been attained, they had reached the main entrance of the dwelling and the Hindoo was disappearing within the portal.

Miss Norreys dismounted, a couple of grooms having seen their approach and being in waiting; the Lady Georgina followed her example and they passed up the steps together.

The Hindoo had laid his burden upon a sofa in the hall.

The hall-porter and a footman stood looking on. Miss Norreys turned to the former.

"Carry the young lady up to my rooms," she said. "Naya is there and will attend to her. Say that I will come directly."

The hall-porter obeyed, disappearing up the grand staircase with Gwen.

Miss Norreys conducted the Lady Georgina to a luxurious morning-room, and presently excused herself, saying that she would send news of Miss Myner as soon as the latter should recover her consciousness.

"Tell her I can't come up to her," said Lord Darkwood's daughter, selfishly. "I can't do her any good, you know, and I'm not good at nursing. I'm very fond of her and all that, but she is only my companion, Miss Norreys."

This speech was prompted by Georgina's desire to play the great lady before her beautiful hostess. The girl really did like Gwen. How could she help it?

Gwen was so noble, so true, so unselfish that a person with more ingrained self-love than Georgina could not have helped admiring and loving her.

But Georgina fancied that she would lower herself in avowing an affection for her hired companion, and she had a desire to stand well in the esteem of Miss Norreys.

Her hostess, with a slight curl of her scarlet lips, departed, going upstairs to her own private apartments.

Her bedchamber was a perfect bower of beauty; the soft, warm flush of rose-pink walls and upholstery pervaded the room.

A brass bedstead, polished like a mirror, and shrouded in hangings of white lace and rose silk, stood in the centre of the room, and upon it lay Gwen, still white as death, and insensible.

Naya, the Hindoo maid of Miss Norreys, a calm-faced, serene-eyed woman past middle age, whose idol was her beautiful mistress, had removed Gwen's outer garments and placed her in the bed.

Miss Norreys looked down upon the girl, upon the loosened tresses of bronze-gold hair, upon the thin eyelids through which the dusk showed faintly, upon the straight, Greek features, and her first thought was that Gwen was dead.

Naya read the thought in her dilating eyes. "She revived when they laid her down, missy," she said, hastily. "She drew a long breath—so—and shut her eyes again. See, I will revive her!"

The Hindoo went into the dressing-room, returning with a little gold-stoppered flask. With its contents she bathed Gwen's face, and she let a drop fall between the parted lips.

A long, sighing breath came from the girl—she opened her eyes—and a look of wonder filled them as they rested upon Miss Norreys.

"Do not speak," said the latter, gently. "You are at Beechmont. I am Miss Norreys. Hush, dear Naya, look at her wounds!"

The Hindoo, with long brown fingers, gently turned the girl's face away, and the wound upon her head was seen plainly.

It was a deep cut, but nothing dangerous. Naya washed away the coagulated blood from the wound, and dressed it with a slip of plaster.

"That will do now, missy," she said. "It will be well in a week. Have you no other wound?"

"My arm hurts!" said Gwen faintly.

The arm was examined. It was found to be terribly bruised, and the wrist was sprained. Naya applied lotions and medicaments, and Gwen, presently acknowledged herself to feel easier. But the lines drawn tightly about her mouth and forehead showed that she was still in pain, and Naya administered a sleeping potion.

Miss Norreys went to her dressing-room, changed her habit, and returned fully dressed, just as the medical man of Dunholm was ushered into the bedroom.

The physician examined the girl's injuries, investigated the medicaments, shook his head solemnly, not understanding them; but when he saw that the patient was sleeping peacefully, he designed to approve the Hindoo's ministrations, made one or two suggestions, and departed.

Miss Norreys drew a chair to the bedside, and watched the sleeper with a strange intensity.

"Is she not beautiful, Naya?" she whispered. "Beautiful as the morning-missy," answered the Hindoo. "You are the golden moon. She is the bright, sweet spring; you are the warm, magnificent summer. I like best the noon and the summer."

Miss Norreys looked affectionately into the dark, loving face of her attendant.

"You will spoil me, Naya, with your praises," she said. "Do you see a look of patient sadness about this girl's eyes and mouth? Young as she is, she has seen trouble. She looks as if she might be the darling of some happy home—she is really a paid companion to Lord Darkwood's heiress."

"She would be a pretty pet and companion for you, missy," suggested Naya, marking her mistress's interest in the girl.

Miss Norreys smiled wearily. "I shall keep her here a day or two, until she recovers," she said. "By that time I shall probably tire of her; as I tire of everybody but you, dear old Naya. And yet there is something about her that touches me strangely. As she lies now asleep, there is a baby innocence in her face that few girls keep to her age. How her mother must love her."

Miss Norreys sighed; her haughty face shadowed heavily.

There was a knock upon the door. Naya opened it, bringing to her mistress a card upon a salver.

Miss Norreys took up the card. It bore the name of Lord Darkwood.

"He is in the morning-room, missy," said the Hindoo.

Miss Norreys arose.

"I will see him," she said. "Miss Myner cannot be moved under a day or two, and Lord Darkwood is her employer. I must tell him!"

She descended to the morning-room. Lord Darkwood and his daughter were together. She was sullen, having just received a reproof from her father for not joining her companion and winning the favour of Miss Norreys by her devotion to Gwen.

The mistress of Beechmont swept into the room, richly dressed, superb in her beauty and hauteur, and the marquis stood up, bowing low before her.

At sight of him Miss Norreys's look turned to stone.

She was always pale; now every vestige of colour drifted out of her olive face.

Her brown eyes dilated in a strange terror, an awful emotion that swept over her soul like a devastating tornado.

Lord Darkwood, his head bent low in a reverential bow, saw nothing of the effect of her momentary glimpse of his face.

The Lady Georgina had turned to a window in her sullenness, and also saw nothing of it.

By the time the marquis fixed his gaze upon Miss Norreys, the lady had obtained control over herself.

But she was still white and that strange terror still brooded in her eyes.

She moved gracefully to a seat, seeing nothing in a momentary blindness that had come upon her.

Lord Darkwood's soul welled within him as his eyes dwelt upon her marvellous beauty.

He made haste to account for his visit by thanking his hostess warmly for her kindness and hospitality to his daughter and to her companion.

"Is Miss Myner seriously injured?" he asked.

"Not seriously, yet she ought not to be removed for a day or two," said Miss Norreys, in a sweet contralto voice, that was purest music. "I must request you to allow her to remain for the time mentioned. She shall have every care, as I need hardly assure you."

"Certainly," said Lord Darkwood, "she shall stay. She is a dear, sweet girl, Miss Norreys, and my Georgina is devotedly attached to her. They have not been separated for months. Georgina will feel her friend's illness."

"Will not the Lady Georgina favour me with a visit so long as Miss Myner remains?" inquired Miss Norreys, courteously.

Lord Darkwood turned his face towards his daughter, frowning darkly upon her, and commanding her in every ill-cut feature to accept the invitation thus extended.

And Georgina accepted it.

"I will have your maid send over whatever you may require, Georgina," said her father, pleasantly.

"Miss Norreys, you are too kind to my little girl, and too her friend also. Miss Myner is a lovely girl, and I am glad to hear that you do not consider her in danger. Having relieved my anxiety, I will not prolong my stay. I will come again, and, as often as you will allow me, to inquire after my daughter's young companion who has greatly endeared herself to us."

True to his word, he did not prolong his stay. Miss Norreys invited him to call again, and he went away.

As he rode down the beech-shaded avenue, his whole being in a tumult, he muttered:

"I have found at last the peerless woman I mean to marry! I love her at first sight!—I who thought never to love again! Beauty, wealth, and rank all combined in one person. She is not over twenty-five, and the most royally superb woman living. She shall be mine! I have never failed yet in aught I have undertaken. I shall win her for my wife! Hail to the future Marchioness of Darkwood!"

He rode on gaily, joyful over his anticipated triumph.

As the sound of his horse's hoofs died out on the avenue, Miss Norreys sat down again, and once more observing that Georgina would have noticed her returning pallor, and would have heard her whisper to herself:

"Am I dreaming? What does it mean? He here—he!"

(To be continued.)

## THE BARONET'S SON;

OR,

### LOVE AND HATE.

BY THE AUTHOR OF

"Winifred Wynne," "One Sparkle of Gold," etc., etc.

#### CHAPTER LIV.

"MISS GLADYS, Good Heavens! is it you, and at such a time, when you ought to be a hundred miles off?" said the old steward, who had been in the Vandeleur family before the marriage of Sir Lewis and who was now only occupying an honourable brevet post in his advanced and feeble age.

He might well pause to consider the very identity of the young creature he had seen growing up from her infancy.

Gladys was much changed from the bright and beautiful girl who had won the heart of the deceased Brooke Rawleigh and who had seemed to be formed for the very light and pride of a luxurious and wealthy home.

Her face had perhaps gained in expression far more than it had lost in bloom and in sunny brightness, but lovely as she still was in the ideas of any person of discernment and of taste, yet the pale, me that overpread her somewhat sharpened features and the pensive sadness that shaded her eyes, habitual to them had in a great measure altered their general aspect at a brief and casual glance.

The elegance of her tasteful costume in former days, when there were no limits to the money, the daughter of Sir Lewis Vandeleur might lavish on her dress, save what her own refined simplicity could furnish, was now exchanged for the severely plain and by no means becoming robe that might be worn by a sister of charity.

It gave a certain sweetness perhaps to the delicate face. But the change was too great not to startle one who had been a stranger to the fair girl for so many and eventful months.

"Why not? Why should I not be allowed to be admitted to my old home—to my father's house, Masted?" she said, gently.

"Miss Gladys, you surely cannot know, you have not heard that—that—"

"That what, good Masted?" she replied. "Do you mean that I am not aware of the nature of my father's—of Sir Lewis's illness?" she asked, calmly.

"You know that it is small-pox. Yes, confident, terrible small-pox?" said the steward, fearfully.

Gladys bowed her head in assent.

"I do, good friend, and that is what has brought me here," she replied, calmly.

The old man raised his eyebrows in deepening surprise.

"Dear young lady, be advised. Leave the old folks like me to be carried off by that dreadful pest. But you and Miss Wynn—no, no, it is too terrible—it cannot be," he went on, in his grave, fatherly style, that might well have overruled the more timid among the weaker sex by its solemn warnings.

"Where is she—my sister, Masted?" asked the girl.

"She has left long since. She was too terrified to remain, and Dr. Franks said as that was the case she had better best go away," was the reply.

"Then there will be some left and that will suffice. I am resolved, Masted, and you have no reason or right to hinder me," returned Gladys, firmly.

"At least, Miss Gladys, give me time. There is no hurry for a few minutes. Give me time to ask the doctor; he will tell me what should be done. I returned the steward, pleadingly.

Gladys hesitated.

"She was too bent on her loving duty to brook any delay, and it might well have ended in her complete victory over the kindly and zealous servant, but that the roll of carriage wheels hindered the arrival of the physician on an empire of the contest."

"You wish to nurse Sir Lewis? Are you aware of the extreme risk you are running?" asked Dr. Franks.

"Perfectly."

"And have no fear for yourself?"

"None, none!" she said, in an accent of such bitterness that it could scarcely help attracting the doctor's notice.

"Are you so anxious for your father's discharge, that you are willing to risk your own life?" asked, quickly.

"Perhaps one, perhaps both. It is surely enough that I do not fear and that I wish to do my duty," she said, proudly.

"Remember the risk of disfigurement as well as of life. You may lose sight and beauty and all that youth holds dear," he returned.

"I know it. Heaven can protect me and bless the effort to far higher purposes than my poor life or happiness could be worth," she replied.

"Then, in Heaven's name, make the essay and may it bless and guard you, brave girl," said the physician, fervently. "But first I must insist on every precaution for you that can be taken by human skill. There is no instant necessity for you to go to your dangerous work. This evening I will return with the necessary appliances for visiting you, before commencing your task, and then, with the diligent use of the directions I shall give, you may escape the penalty of your boldness."

Gladys assented, perhaps with a secret thankfulness.

She was wearied and perhaps weakened by the efforts and the self-denial she had so long been practising.

And her own sense and bodily feelings told her the wisdom, if not necessity of the delay which gave a chance of rest and nourishment ere she took up her cross.

Her cross? Yes, it was indeed irksome and



heavy, was that young creature's burden. But it was bravely, nay bravely and hopefully, borne till the end should bring peace and reward.

"Wenna, Wenna! Are you there, my child, my own darling?" murmured Sir Lewis Vandeleur, after three weeks of anxious and, at times hopeless, nursing from his eldest and rejected daughter.

"It is I, dear papa. Are you better? Yes, I know you are," said the sweet, patient voice of her who had been the unknown, long-tried attendant of the sufferer.

There was a pause.

"Gladys, where is she?" came at length, on the girl's eager ears.

The tears, joyful, gracious, welcome tears started in the young girl's eyes.

She was, then, not utterly tabooed in her father's love.

He did remember her in his wanderings of mind, his weakness of body.

And it might be that the real nature was displaying itself now, when scarcely accountable for his actions or his thoughts.

"Would you like to see her—to see Gladys, papa?" she asked, gently.

"Alas, alas, all is dark," he said. "I see nothing—nothing. Merciful Providence!—can I be blind?" he went on, with a convulsive shudder.

"Heaven forbid, dearest father. Heaven forbid," she returned, with difficulty suppressing a cry of horror at the idea.

"But I cannot see. Is it night? Open the curtains. Give me light!" he resumed, with a low, convulsive, gasping tone.

"Papa, you have been so ill—you have had small-pox. Very often persons are blind for a little time and recover afterwards. Be patient. We shall know more when Dr. Franks comes," she rejoined, striving to speak calmly.

There was silence again for some minutes.

Then the invalid spoke again.

"Is it Wenna? It is scarcely her voice. But still it must be. There is no one else. And surely she would not leave me in my terrible strait," the baronet said, plaintively.

"Your daughter is near you. She has been with you night and day. She will not desert you, dearest father," replied Gladys, softly.

The voice was low.

Moreover there had ever been a similarity between the tones of the sisters in their ordinary talk that might deceive one less familiar with them than their stern father.

But in this case perhaps his suspicions were unusually aroused.

"Who is it that speaks? Tell me at once. I will know," he said, with a touch of imperiousness even in his miserable and awe-striking extremity.

Gladys dared not disobey.

Her lips had never yet been stained by a falsehood.

And now when it might have succeeded in deceiving her own parent in his woful helplessness she would not have dared to attempt such a fraud, even when intended for his good and his comfort.

"Papa, dearest papa. Do not be angry. It is I—the Gladys. I ventured to return when you were so ill," she said, softly. "Will you forgive me? I could not keep away and leave you to strangers."

He turned his sightless eyes in the direction of her voice.

"Child! how dare you? Where is Wenna?" he asked, hoarsely.

Gladys was mute.

She would not, she dared not, wound him and expose her sister unless by dire necessity.

"I insist on a reply. Is Wenna in this house?—I can soon know," he said again, sternly.

"No, papa. She was so terrified—she could not control it, I am sure. And she went away—from the infection—she was always so timid about it, you know."

Sir Lewis did not answer.

And when he did speak it scarcely was in reference to his daughter's words.

The murmured accents only conveyed the one wail:

"Blind, blind, blind!"

Yes, blind he had been.

There could be little doubt of that in the long past.

There had been a dark and thickened cloud over the faculties of that unhappy man.

Was it only to be cleared from the haunted vision at the expense of the bodily faculties?

"Where is Wenna now?" repeated the baronet, after this pause.

"Papa, I scarcely know. I believe she wrote to Lady Edith Dupuy, to ask for a shelter for a brief

space, I believe she is gone there, but I am really not quite certain of her residence at this moment," replied Gladys, hesitatingly.

"Girl, girl, do not think you deceive me?" said Sir Lewis, sternly. "Do you mean that she has actually placed herself beyond reach of communication, that she does not even have tidings of me, whether I am living or dead?" said the baronet, sternly.

"No, papa. I doubt not that Wenna has constant communication with those who can give her news of your health," returned Gladys, firmly. "Do not be unjust to her in her terror that she does not dare to receive any letters from this house. Poor girl! she is more to be pitied than blamed, papa," she urged, softly.

But the baronet did not make any response to the tacit appeal.

He lay silent for a long interval.

His features were rigid and pale, as if a catalepsy had seized him.

And his daughter sat in mute and trembling reverence for the struggle that was evidently working in his breast.

How she yearned to throw her arms round that disfigured face and press her lips on the sightless eyes in loving sympathy.

Fear and disgust disappeared in the warm, gushing sorrow for the fearful blow which had struck down the strong stern man in the affliction that was well-nigh more than the firmest and the bravest could bear unmoved.

He spoke at last.

"Gladys, I have perhaps been severe with you," he said, at last. "You have more than atoned if you disobeyed my will. I confess that I was unjust, and ask your forgiveness, and, mark me, child, it is the first time that I ever said those words to any mortal being."

"And I only accept them as pardon and peace, dear father," she said, sadly. "Let the past be forgotten. I will never leave you more."

"Not for Oscar?" he asked, quickly.

"No, papa, not for Oscar, except for a brief time," she said, in a low voice that had tears in it. "Poor fellow, he will not need me, he cannot have help from me more."

Sir Lewis did not say anything in reply. Perhaps he did not heed those last words.

Or else he buried them deep, deep, in his heart of heart.

There was indeed no long opportunity of dwelling on the subject.

In a few minutes Dr. Franks was announced.

"Well, Sir Lewis, you are safe, quite safe, unless from some great imprudence now," he said, after a short examination of his patient.

"Safe from death, to endure a living death," returned the baronet. "Doctor, I will have truth, remember. Tell me, is my sight gone for ever?"

The physician gave a quick sigh.

It was to the quick ears of Gladys and the sharpened senses of the father a wail of woe.

But another moment in some means mitigated the sharp pang.

"I hope, I believe not, Sir Lewis; but I will not pledge my reputation on the opinion," he replied.

"There are numbers of cases where the temporary darkness is removed after the complete cure of its cause. Still, though I hope it is so with you, I could not as yet positively decide on the result."

"And what is to be done? What will test it?" asked Gladys, eagerly.

"When your father is well enough it would be best for him to go to London to some of the oculists there. It will be soon decided by their skill," said the doctor, decidedly. "Meanwhile, Sir Lewis, remember that for days your life hung on a thread, and that your little daughter risked hers, and what is often more prized still by youthful women—her beauty, for your sake. You owe her indeed more than any wealth can pay," he went on, half-angrily.

"And now, Miss Gladys, I will have no more nonsense. You will go to your bed and remain there, till the morning. It may save you from a brain fever, for ought I know."

And the good doctor fairly turned the girl out of the sick chamber, while the invalid turned wearily on his side and endeavoured to sleep.

To sleep, no! but to so calm and school his strong nature's agitation that he should be more able to decide as the new and strange course which his long found and strangely carried out plans were taking.

But in his case the last—in his heart and affections—promised to be first.

## CHAPTER LV.

"WENNA, do I really understand that you have left your father to servants and to strangers?" asked Cecil Dupuy, gravely, of the youngest daughter of

Sir Lewis, at his first meeting with her, after her arrival at the Castle.

"What could I have done? what use was it for me to risk certain death, ay, and worse than death?" she said, with a shudder. "Papa would have been the first to desire it; you know how anxious and proud he was of me," she went on. "And he believed you were so also," she added, with a veiled, soft glance, that appealed to any latent affection that Cecil might have been supposed to cherish for her.

"You were his favourite daughter—his all—he had banished your sister from his house and his heart."

"Which would you have supposed would be most ready to risk all for him?" was the reproachful reply. "Yet your sister is now nursing him in his loathsome disease. That is rather an anomaly, is it not? and might lead to strange complications."

"Scarcely," she said, proudly. "I know perfectly well what are my father's wishes and intentions for me, Lord Dupuy. I have always obeyed him. I believe I am obeying him now, and therefore I shall surely receive the reward he intended for me. Lord Dupuy, you are unkind to doubt it, and to give me such cold, hard reproaches," she went on, with a half-pouting, half-tearful look.

"No, I would not willingly add to your grief, and the self-reproach you will feel," he returned; "but it is necessary—more than necessary, that you should understand me aright. Perhaps Sir Lewis may have told you all that passed between us. If not, I feel it unjust to yourself and to me, that you should understand fully the truth."

"I scarcely understand you, my lord. I certainly did hear from my father of certain plans and arrangements that had passed between himself and the earl," she said. "I do not know whether you allude to that or some other fancy you may have taken as to my unlucky self."

"But his was no temper to shrink from what he believed to be his absolute duty, in honour and in chivalrous respect for the sex to which Wenna Vandeleur belonged."

"Wenna, it is a painful task to explain what did really take place between your father and myself; but it must be done to prevent all future and flagrant mistakes now that he is so ill. Will you listen to me and believe in my honesty, even if you are angry with what I venture on saying?"

The girl's cheeks flushed scarlet.

She looked up at him with a haughty and doubtful air.

"I cannot promise blindfold, my lord. I presume that you will not say one word that can be offensive to me in my father's absence!" she said, coldly.

"Not willingly, Wenna; not one word that I would not venture upon in his presence," he replied, with more firmness than he had before spoken.

The very manner in which she had met his well-meant and candid speech had braced him to a more determined mode of action.

"To return to the first commencement of our acquaintance," he said. "Are you aware that I met and knew your sister? And though it was but a glimpse, yet it proved to me that she was one who was the real instinctive choice of my heart. There was an attraction about her that I felt, though I did not dare to avow its power. Then after my return to the Castle came the great and final blow. Wenna, do not mistake me, I did, I do full justice to your attraction and powers. Your intellect and your person are perhaps even superior to your sister's. And if I had been different to what I am in my strange, wayward nature, I might have found you even more charming than Gladys. Then when it was proposed to me as a necessity that I should marry an heiress, and Sir Lewis declared that you should be made the sole possessor of his property if I would consent to the alliance—freed from repugnance to a marriage of convenience rose up in the way. Can you not understand such a feeling, Wenna?" he added, gently.

"Go on, let me hear all," she said with a cold, reticent air that gave no idea of her real feelings.

"There is not so much more to tell," he went on. "The negotiations, for such it was, was concluded at last. My father and yours had arranged it, long before I ever thought it possible I could consent to risk your happiness and my own. But there was so much at stake that I did yield on one condition, and one only."

"And what was that?" she asked, in the same wooden tone.

"That your brother Oscar's possession of the entailed property should be an absolute impossibility," he said. "And that you should be informed that it was not absolute and free choice and affection which dictated my proposal. Was that wrong, was that dishonourable?" he went on, pleadingly.

The girl remained silent.

(To be continued.)



[ "LET ME PASS!" ]

## MACKENZIE'S WIFE.

"Ah," said Benedict, "what you would call a mésalliance, I suppose."

"What I should call a low marriage of the most miserable description," answered his hostess. "The facts are these: The boy is a millionaire and his family is one of the best in Scotland. His mother, who is a widow, is also a foolish, unsophisticated woman with rigid Scotch notions. She allowed him no companion, and, very naturally, he went among the tenantry to find his friends. The girl's father kept a small shop in the village and she used to stand behind the counter, I believe. She is one of those amazing cases of almost wonderful physical beauty. She is a dull, handsome, ignorant creature, and poor young Mackenzie fell madly in love with her. As soon as he came of age he married her; and now, you see, we have her on our hands."

"We?" said Benedict.

Mrs. Benham shrugged her shoulders.

"We are fond of the young man himself and we do not like to estrange him completely. And, of course, we must invite the wife too."

"And her husband is attached to her still?"

"My dear sir, he is that kind of young man who would be fond of any woman he saw often; and he has married this woman because, as I tell you, she is really a handsome creature. One cannot deny that, though it is natural to protest against it inwardly."

It was Benedict's turn to shrug his shoulders.

"Poor child!" he said.

He could not help repeating the exclamation to himself when a few minutes later his companion was called away.

He did not feel inclined to return to the parlour at once, so he remained where he was.

He was fatigued, mentally and physically, and the silence and perfume of the little conservatory suited

his mood better than the confusion of the outer rooms.

Accordingly he settled himself again in his seat and gave himself up to fancies, which, naturally enough, were fancies concerning this unfortunate young couple.

He had that morning met the husband—a fair-faced young Scotchman—who had called at his studio to ask him to paint his wife's portrait and whose buoyant spirits and perfect frankness had somewhat amused, even while they pleased, the older man.

"It is an idea of my own, you see," he had said. "I want a picture of her as I saw her first, in an old blue dress and with a lot of mountain-ash in her hair. It is not every woman who would be painted in an old dress to please her husband. Women-folk like to be braw, but Rob doesn't care, though she is the handsomest woman in London to-day, I'd lay a heavy bet."

This was what had prompted the artist to make inquiry of his hostess, and his question had drawn forth the whole story.

"Poor lad," he murmured, "and poor girl!"

The next moment he turned in his chair, attracted by a sound behind him, the rustle of a woman's dress on the other side of the bushes, against which his seat was placed. It was the rustle of a dress, he was sure—so sure that he got up to make surer, and so was just in time to find himself confronting the woman who wore it.

He could not help uttering an exclamation. She was scarcely more than a girl—a girl with a deep-eyed, beautiful young face, and with heavy, ruddy brown hair twisted round her head.

"Let me pass," she said.

She was deadly pale but for a spot of dull red burning on either cheek, her eyes were full of hard defiance, and his next glance showed him that her costly toy of a fan was nothing more than a handful of crushed lace and slender snapped strips of tortoiseshell.

"Madam," he began. She stopped him, a kind of stubborn daring in her speech.

"I'm Rob Mackenzie," she said. "I've been in there all the time. I couldn't get out without her seeing me. I've heard every word you've said. Will you let me pass?"

He was a man of kindly and chivalrous nature, this Philip Benedict. His enemies even called him sentimental, and transcendental in their worst moods, and the sight of this girl's bitter pretence at indifference touched him to the quick.

"Forgive me," he said. "I cannot let you go until I have explained my sorrow for what has happened."

She stopped him again.

"What does it matter?" she answered. "What's said is said. I don't care—why should I?"

"But I care," he pleaded. "And there is reason enough why I should. I feel this deeply. I deplore it with all my heart."

She hesitated a moment, but as if she scarcely believed in his earnestness.

"I'm used to it," she said, "and you said nothing yourself. Most men would have said more. There's no reason why I should blame you."

"I blame myself," he protested.

"You needn't," she returned. "It's all true, every word of it. It's a low marriage. He's a gentleman and I'm just what she said. I'm a dull, handsome, ignorant creature—a kind of fine animal. That's it," she continued, with a short laugh and a little scornful nod. "Will you let me pass now?"

He stepped aside with a bow.

She passed him and then stopped.

"Shall you tell that woman?" she demanded, abruptly.

"You may rest assured," he replied, "that I shall not."

"Then I'll say I forgive you, though there's no need," she answered.

And without further ceremony she left him to his thoughts.

They were not very pleasant ones. He felt remorseful and disturbed as if he had really done her an actual injury. If he had said nothing, he had at least listened, and he condemned himself for doing so, without asking himself how it would have been possible to check his hostess in her comments.

"I wonder how she will meet me to-morrow?" he murmured, as he returned to the parlour. "It is an awkward business and a painful one."

But he found that there was no cause for uneasiness. When the time for the meeting arrived she met him with a coolness which almost staggered him. Certainly Mackenzie himself had no reason to imagine that the two had met before. She was ready, dressed in the coarse dark blue serge and with the cluster of scarlet berries in her hair, and she had been a far less striking figure the night before than she was at this moment, as she stood in the long, richly fitted room, almost seeming, in her rustic costume, to set its luxury at defiance.

"He wanted me to wear it," she said. "I suppose he told you?"

There was always in her manner, Benedict remarked, a proudly silent submission to her husband. It was as if she was continually influenced by her determination to submit to him, even in the merest trifle.

"You must never tell him," she said, abruptly, during the morning; and, though the words were indefinite enough, the artist understood them at once.

"No, no!" he answered.

"He's very fond of me," she went on; "and he's very kind to me. I've always kept it from him and I always will as long as I can."

But fond as he was of her, Mackenzie did not see what Benedict saw, when he learned to know her better.

To Alan it only seemed that she was prone to silence and averse to mingling with strangers; and finding himself unable to conquer her disinclination for society, he gave it up good-naturedly, leaving the matter to time.

It was because everything was new to her, he told himself.

She would get over it in a year or so, and in the interval she should feel herself entirely unconstrained and free to follow her own inclinations. But Benedict, who had half a score of years more experience, saw deeper.

The grandeur and ceremony surrounding the girl lay heavy upon her. In the midst of it she was lost and lonely.

She was morbidly sensitive and her whole life was a bitter secret protest against her position. She had cultivated a kind of proud stolidity and often stole herself even against people who might have befriended her.

"There'll be more than Alan that will like to see that," she said once, pointing to the picture.



Benedict looked up inquiringly and saw upon her lips a queer, significant smile.

"They'll like to see me in that dress," she said. "They'll say among themselves that it suits me better than velvet and lace. And so it does."

This last abruptly as she stood before the easel, with her hands hanging clasped before her.

"So it does," she repeated. "Silk and satin is not for me by right. My fine feathers haven't made me a fine bird. I thought I was going to be grand and happy, but I'd better have stayed at home, where the eagles would not peck at me because I was naught but a hedge sparrow."

"Rob seems to get on wonderfully well with you, Benedict," Alan said several times. "I wish she got on as well with other people. She is not shy with you, or even the least backward."

And this was true enough. Perhaps the peculiar nature of their first meeting had paved the way for unceremonious frankness.

At all events, their intercourse became an unconstrained and almost confidential one before the picture was completed; and, after its completion, Benedict's position in the household was established.

Generously prone to hero-worship; indeed, generously prone to all good-natured, youthful impulses, Alan was delighted to find the artist falling, by easy gradations, into the place of family friend.

Long before their first meeting he had admired his pictures with all the lavish amiability of an amiable youngster, who knew nothing of art but what people told him, and on these days he admired the man wholesale, also; admired his good looks, his knowledge of the world and his ready wit.

"The oftener you can spare us an evening the better," he would say. "The better for me and the better for Rob. She likes to talk to you, and what she wants is some one who will draw her out. People who cannot draw her out never know her. She is not easy to get at. Sometimes, do you know? I am not sure that I quite understand her myself."

The claims this world had upon him often left the girl to her own resources. He was popular and fond of society and she herself never went out when it was possible to remain at home.

"He is better without me than with me," she said, to Benedict, "though he does not think so. Wait until I am more used to it, and then I will go—to please him."

So Benedict, who was a hard worker and consequently often too tired for actual gaiety, frequently found himself spending an evening at the house when chance called Alan away.

Other things than her great beauty touched and interested him.

Her youth, her solitariness in the midst of the whirl of fashionable life, her constant effort to keep her unhappiness a secret from the light-hearted boy who loved her.

All these filled him with pity and tenderness for her.

And these feelings prompted him at length to speak to her openly of a certain plan he had formed mentally.

"You are not very old, Mrs. Mackenzie?" he said, smiling gently as he shook hands with her one night.

"I'm nineteen," she answered. "I was eighteen when Alan married me."

"One may learn a great deal after nineteen," he said.

She regarded him questioningly for a few seconds, and then caught at his meaning.

"Could I learn?" she asked. "A dull, handsome creature like me? Only dull and handsome—nothing else."

"You are not dull, at least," he returned. "Forget that speech as soon as possible. If you would try, you might learn anything you chose."

"Might I?" she said. "Might I?" In the little pause that followed he saw a slow flush creep up on her face and then she clenched her hand in a sudden gesture.

"No," she cried. "It was false. I am not dull. And why shouldn't I learn? I will learn. I'll work with all my strength and I'll be a lady yet."

"Make the best of your life and that will be enough," he said, kindly. "It is easy for a good woman to be a lady."

Her face hardened itself a little.

"I'm not a good woman," she said; "but I am going to try to learn."

Then she went to a table and brought out a piece of paper and pen and ink.

"Write me down a list of books to buy," she said, "and I'll get them to-morrow."

She was plainly so much in earnest, that he sat down and complied with her request, to the best of his ability.

She took the paper and thanked him.

"Don't tell Alan," she said. "When I'm sure I can do it, perhaps I'll tell him myself."

Some men might have fancied it a caprice, which, in all probability, would prove short lived; but Benedict understood her better than to make such a mistake.

There was steadfast determination in her very brevity of speech.

When he came again he found she had very practical results. She had bought the books and engaged a teacher; a quiet, unknown man; who was to come only during the hours when her husband would be absent.

"He will give me work to do when he is away, and I shall do it," she said, to Benedict. "He is very quiet, but he knows a great deal. 'He has taught people like me often enough,' he says."

There was a suggestion of fierceness in the manner in which she applied herself to her work. In Alan's absence she laboured incessantly, her eagerness seeming to grow with what it fed on. She was never tired, always ready to begin new tasks.

The quiet teacher confidentially informed Benedict that he was amazed.

"It is not uncommon to meet with considerable distaste and reluctance," he said, in mild mystification, "but here there is actual feverishness, as one might express it."

Unless Alan himself was at home, Benedict never entered the house without finding the girl poring over her books; and often enough he discovered her crouched upon the hearth, reading by the fire, too much absorbed to think of ringing for other light.

"It is something for me to do," she said. "It fills up my time and makes the day seem less dreary."

"It makes you happier," Benedict remarked once.

"Yes," she answered. "I think I'm happier, as much happier as I can be."

It was quite natural that through such familiar companionship the two should learn much of each other, and be drawn near together.

When they met in society, as they always did upon the rare occasions when the girl went out, she always turned to Benedict for support, as it were. He helped and sustained her, standing between her and coldness or disdain.

"I don't care when you are with me," she said, one night, when he had given her his arm to lead her across a crowded room. "They know that Alan does not see, but you—"

But there she stopped, with a flushing cheek, checking herself suddenly.

It was a little dangerous that he should always find it so; that it should seem that he was almost necessary to her; that he could help her as her husband could not.

"It is because I am the older man. He will learn in time," he would say to himself.

But the time came at last when even this sober thought did not prevent his pulse beating somewhat more quickly when the handsome girl-face turned towards him in eager expectation, as the little hand clung closely to his arm.

It was a dangerous thing, but his very chivalrous truth itself prevented his seeing his danger. But there were others who were ready enough to see the hazard of it, even in the earliest stages of the friendship, and who were quick enough to exchange glances when they entered a room together or when Alan spoke in his generous fashion of his admiration for his friend.

"It shows what a splendid fellow he is," he often said. "The mere fact of his caring so much for young nobodies, like Bob and myself, when he might be such a lion, if he would. I tell you he is a tremendous fellow!"

And so the intimacy continued until the winter, and then, one evening, Benedict called and found Alan in the dining-room, flushed and joyous, holding his wife in his arms, in a high state of excitement.

"Benedict!" he cried out, as the artist advanced. "I am the happiest fellow in the world!"

And he held out his hand.

Benedict looked at Rob.

No tender yielding to the loving young arm expressed itself in her figure. She simply stood still and allowed it to clasp her waist. Her eyes were downcast, and Benedict saw that her calmness cost her a struggle.

"He has found out what I have been doing," she said, without lifting her eyes. "And I have told him how you have helped me."

"Yes," exclaimed Mackenzie, his fair, boyish face glowing. "I have found out what she has been doing for my sake, Benedict, for my sake. I found the books and dear little exercises, and they touched my heart as nothing ever touched it before. I am a happy fellow, Rob, my dear, Heaven bless you!"

But Rob said nothing, even when he turned and kissed her. She had not raised her eyes yet, and Benedict saw her tremble.

Alan saw it too, and made her sit down. He fancied she was excited as he was himself. His heart was so full that he could not be silent. If she had been dear to him before, how much dearer was she now?—his handsome Rob! His bonny Rob!

What woman in the land could have done a more gracious thing than she had done for his sake? He was not worthy of it. He was not a clever fellow, like Benedict; he was not clever, like she was herself; he could only be grateful to her, and love her more tenderly than ever. He was too full of delight to notice how silent both were.

As he spoke a chill had gradually crept upon Benedict. Rob's pale face had a painful fascination for him. He scarcely knew what he was thinking of at first, and then the chill became a pang.

He could not bear to hear the joyous, excited young voice; it angered him to see Alan hold his wife's passive hand; it angered him to see him kiss her cold lips. His miserable unrest was a revelation to him; until this moment he had not known how far he had gone, how treacherous the ground was upon which his feet stood.

He left the house as soon as he could excuse himself and when he got into the street a little groan broke from him.

"I builded worse than I knew," he said, grimly. "I must go away. I did not think that I was so nearly a villain. I must go away. I will bid her good-bye to-morrow."

He was not the man to tamper with dishonour. His was the simple creed of right and wrong. There was enough passionate misery in his heart as he said these few words.

He could only go away. He could only go away.

He would not pretend to give up, and still linger within the pale of temptation. Where this woman's life was lived there lay temptation for him and he had courage enough to fear it. He sat up all night, smoking his pipe among his pictures, and making plans.

He had long intended to travel and put it off from year to year.

Now he would go. Once, in the outset of his career, he had spent a long-to-be-remembered winter in Rome, working well and gaining much. When his wanderings were over, he would go there again, for a year at least.

Rob started at the sight of his haggardness, when he presented himself the next evening. She looked colourless and worn herself and her eyes were heavy.

"Something has gone wrong," she exclaimed. "I can see it in your face. What is it?"

He did not release her hand after he had taken it; he fancied its light touch would give him courage; so he retained it.

"I am going to make a journey," he said, "a long one and I have come to bid you good-bye."

She staggered back a pace, and stared blankly at him.

"To bid me good-bye?" she said. "Good-bye?"

"Yes," he answered her; and then he added: "Do not make it harder for me to say. It is hard enough as it is."

She looked at him as if she was stunned.

"It is very sudden!" she said, in a dull, blind fashion. "It is very sudden!"

And then she drew her hand away and went and sat down.

Then it was, just at this instant, as her uplifted eyes met his, that he saw his danger was even greater than he had fancied, when he thought he faced it at its worst.

The blow which had struck him to the heart had struck her also; he was in that worst of danger, the danger of being conquered by another's anguish.

There was little need of words. Each met the glance of the other and Rob uttered a low cry and covered her face with her hands.

He went to her and stood close to her side, speaking in a hurried voice:

"I am going away," he said, "because I am not as honest a man as I thought I was. I have been blind for a long time, but last night my eyes were opened and I found myself standing upon the brink of an abyss. Do you not see why I say good-bye?"

She uncovered her face and cried aloud.

Her words came with a breathlessness that indicated she had no self pity.

"I am a bad woman! I am a bad woman! Let me speak to you and confess how bad and false I have been. Perhaps I will make it easier for you to turn your back on me."

"Nothing will do that," he answered.

But she would speak.

"If you have been blind, I have been worse. I sold myself for money and grand things. I wanted to be happy and wanted to be made much of; and he was so fond of me, I never cared for him at all. The love he lavished on me was undeserved, and I know it when I promised to marry him. Not for Alan's sake was my work; first, it was for my own, and then—and then for yours. I wanted to be like the women you know and admire."

She passed, then returned, hurriedly:  
"I have cared for you as I could never care for Alan; if I lived with him a thousand years, and saw his goodness every day. When he kissed me last night, and kept saying I had worked for his sake, I almost hated him, because he was so blind, because he was too generous and good."

There was such sharp suffering in her voice that Benedict almost forgot his own pain. He tried to comfort her, though he could scarcely trust himself to speak. Words were unsafe for him in his present mood and did little good. So at last, he relapsed into sad and heavy silence.

"I shall wait for Alan," he had said. "I must say good-bye to him too."

Contrary to their expectations, he had not long to wait. He had not been in the house half an hour when Alan came in.

They heard him enter, and then they heard him coming up the staircase rather slowly.

When he opened the door and stood upon the threshold each turned towards him in wonder.

He was quite pale and his arm was bandaged and placed in a sling. He even seemed somewhat weak, but he advanced towards them with a brave smile.

"Don't be frightened, Rob, my dear," he said, and he put his uninjured arm round her shoulder. "Don't be frightened, my dear; and bent down, touching her forehead with his lips in a manner which Benedict fancied held a meaning.

"I have been punishing a gossiping coward," he went on, after a slight pause; "and I have received a slight injury; only a slight one, you see. I am a little weak, from loss of blood, perhaps. It is a pistol wound, and I am going upstairs as soon as possible to get a good night's rest. But I thought I would stop on my way to my room to say a few words to you. I want you to promise me, my dear Rob and Benedict, that whatever you may chance to hear from any of the evil sources from which all scandalous suggestions spring, you will not lose faith in me; in my love for both of you, and in my perfect trust in your love for me."

"I would rather risk my life a thousand times, my dear Rob and Benedict, than allow any scandal which uttered a breath of wrong against you to go unpunished. Bear witness to Benedict, my dear Rob, that I honour and love him with my whole heart; and bear witness to Rob, my dear Benedict, that I love and revere her beyond all the power of my poor words to express."

He would have touched Rob's forehead again with his lips, but she shrank from him, shaking all over; and before he could stop her she had slipped down upon the floor, her face upon his feet, sobbing out wild, incoherent words.

"Rob!" he cried, bending over her. "My poor, loving girl, it is nothing!"

"It will kill me!" she panted. "I cannot bear it! It will break my heart!"

But he raised her to her feet, pretending to jest at her emotion and yet holding her shrinking form close to his heart.

"Why," he said, "I shall not dare to leave you to entertain Benedict. I shall be obliged to stay with him myself."

"I have no right to your love," she cried, wildly. "I don't deserve it! I bring nothing but shame and pain to you. Send me away!"

"My handsome, foolish Rob!" he answered her, soothingly. "What tender words you women are! You do not know what you are saying."

When, at last, he went upstairs he let her go with him, though he still treated his injury lightly and professed not to feel it.

"It was done two or three hours ago, and since then I have been sitting, comfortably enough, with Brandy. I was a little excited, of course, and I wanted to cool down. Wait here, Benedict. She shall come down again and tell you how awfully I have gone to sleep."

When she did come down again, which was about a quarter of an hour after, the sight of her altered face was a shock to Benedict.

He took her hands, terribly shaken himself. He had only a few words more to say, and he must say them quickly and go.

"Make the best of your life, Rob," he said. "Make the best of it; and it cannot fail to be a noble life that Heaven will bless."

"Yes, I will," she answered. "Yes, I will. I'll try to be a better woman. I'll go on trying to learn. I'll try to be worthy of him, as well as of you."

"Not of me," he said, sadly. "Not of me! Heaven knows, he is the better man of the two, ten thousand times. Let us both try to be worthy of his generous faith."

"I will try to make him happy," she said; "and I will bear everything for his sake. I will do my best for his sake."

There was one moment in which Benedict could not speak.

Then he wrung her hands hard, and then kissed them.

"Heaven be good to you," he whispered; "and good-bye!"

"Good-bye!" she answered; and then her faltering voice broke and he went away, leaving her looking after him with strained, and anguished eyes.

Five years later, Benedict met in Padua a fellow-artist, who was young enough to be interested in good natured gossip and who, having recently left England, had plenty of it on hand.

"You will find many changes when you return," he said. "When do you think of going?"

"In the spring," answered Benedict. "In time to see the world awaken."

"A good time," was the reply. "And, as I say, you will see many a change. By-the-by, did you ever see young Mackenzie's wife?"

"Yes," quietly, as he bent over his brushes.

"A handsome woman, isn't she? How people did protest against that marriage, to be sure! And yet see how it has turned out! Popular opinion is obliged to concede that Mackenzie is a lucky man. They have two of the loveliest children in London, and their mother is a sort of Cordelia. And Mackenzie is honestly in love with her yet. It is quite a romantic affair. They say she spent a year in educating herself, merely though her love for him. It was not easy for her at first, though. The elect were so much against her. There was even a legend that Mackenzie once fought a duel with a fellow who had hinted at some scandal concerning her. I never heard who the other man was. Mackenzie was so fearless and determined about it, that people were afraid to speak and at last nobody believed it. He is a courageous fellow, that Mackenzie, and a generous fellow, too. Everybody likes him."

"Yes," said Benedict. "He is a generous fellow, generous beyond most men's comprehension. He deserves his happiness, Heaven knows."

F. H. B.

## THE DRAMA.

### GAIETY.

MR. CHARLES MATTHEWS appeared on Easter Monday in his own comedy, "My Awful Dad." The piece is chiefly valuable as a vehicle for the display of the veteran's art as an actor. There is a little boastfulness in it now and again, but not more than is excusable, and perhaps less than is true. Charles Matthews is still as young as most of us can remember his ever having been, and his acting has lost little or nothing of its old sparkle and verve and "go." His exit at the close of the first act was full of juvenility, and his manner throughout was racy and exuberant. The house was crowded, and the creator and exponent of Adonis Evergreen was greeted from first to last with the heartiest applause and laughter. The performance closed with the farce of "Cool as a Cucumber" in which Mr. Matthews of course sustained the part of Plump.

### ROYAL AQUARIUM THEATRE.

THE theatre which forms part of the Royal Westminster Aquarium buildings was opened on Saturday evening, April 16th, in the presence of a numerous audience. It is constructed to seat 1,700 persons, and when finished will, no doubt, be a very handsome and bright-looking house. The auditorium is divided into stalls, pit, dress circle, balcony and amphitheatre, the gallery being much more comfortable and inviting in appearance than is usual in this part of a theatre. The orchestra is sunk three feet below the stalls, so that the musicians are concealed. The style of decoration is classical Renaissance; the prevailing colours are pale green and gold, and the ceiling is elaborately treated with pleasing effect.

A radical defect appears to exist in the construction of the auditorium. The usual horseshoe shape has not been adopted, and the dress circle being almost rectangular in form, we fear that the occupants of the side seats and of the back rows have but a very indifferent view of the stage.

Before the programme was entered upon, the National Anthem was sung by the entire company, the soloists being Miss Jessie Sherrington, Mr. George Perren and Mr. Winn.

The farce of "The Tailor Makes the Man" was first given, and created much amusement.

Previous to the drama of "Jo," by the Globe company, Miss Jennie Lee, who plays the title role, and Mr. Edgar Bruce recited a dialogue from the pen of Mr. Clement W. Scott, in which Miss Lee referred to the interesting historical associations connected with the site of the theatre and, congratulating the manager on his "enterprise and pluck," Mr. Bruce, in response, alluded to his part in gauging the "waving fortunes of the London stage," and his welcome task to "crush the frivolous and raise the true." A hearty ovation from the audience followed, after which the drama of "Jo" was performed with great success.

### GLOBE THEATRE.

THE dramatic version of Mr. Wilkie Collins's well-known "Cornhill" story, "Armada," altered by the author for production on the stage, and re-entitled "Miss Gwilt," was produced here on the 15th ult. The piece is capably cast and acted; Miss Ada Cavendish and Mr. Arthur Cecil forming the prominent objects of the five long acts, and Miss Gwilt, the adventuress, and Doctor Downward, journalist, specialist, schemer, and owner of the Sanatorium.

The first scene is laid in the park at Thorpe Ambrose, where we have the meeting of the two pairs of lovers, Armada and Miss Milroy, and Midwinter and Miss Gwilt, and are introduced to also doctor and the major; the second in the fishing-house, the third at Naples; the fourth at Mrs. Midwinter's lodgings; and the fifth a double set in the doctor's Sanatorium.

The first and second scenes, with their love passages, are very pretty and natural.

Mr. B. O. Lyons is the frank lad, Armada, and is pleasantly true to the part. "Miss Augusta Wilton is Miss Milroy, the girl-lover of sixteen; she is naive, and gives an artless picture of the spoiled child. Mr. Charles Collette is Major Milroy, a character which is also a very clever study, whether as the indulgent father, the host, or the indignant gentleman whose eyes are suddenly opened to the fact that a clandestine love affair has been carried on. Mr. Leonard Boyne plays Midwinter—a most arduous part; the character is thoroughly mastered, and is one of the best in the play.

Miss Cavendish's Miss Gwilt presented to the audience the picture of a woman, decided and tempered, into the mire, striving so hard for a higher and purer life, awakening to a passionate love for a man who idolizes her, and, at last, when caught, developing an almost fanatical malignity of hatred in the intensity of her desire for revenge. In the various phases of character displayed, Miss Cavendish's transition from the tender, loving woman, to the same being at bay, then jealous, and again stony, frozen, as it were, in her despair, are most powerful, and utterly free from exaggeration throughout.

Mrs. Arthur Cecil's Dr. Downward is a thorough creation of character, marked by all Mr. Cecil's careful study and appreciation of the part. A more wily, smooth, polished old hypocrite it would be hard to conceive. From the perfection of the dress to the slightest movement, all was studied art, given with apparently unstudied ease. The modulations of the schemer's voice, the insidious temptations, the admonitory raising of a hand, and the laudations of nature's beauties, all won the applause of the house for their genuine mastery of the part.

CHARACTERISTICS OF GLUCK.—Gluck is said never to have put pen to paper until the whole work which he was about to write was completely finished and elaborated in his own mind. (This is also the case with Monsieur Gounod, whose prodigious memory enables him to retain a whole opera in his head without making sketch or memorandum until every detail is in its place and ready for committing to paper. But to return to Gluck. "He has often told me," says M. Cochenne, "that he began by going mentally over each of his acts; afterward he went over the entire piece; that he always composed, imagining himself in the centre of the pit, and that his piece thus combined and his aim characterized, he regarded the work as finished, although he had written nothing, but that this preparation usually cost him an entire year, and was frequently a serious illness. This, said he, is what a great number of people call making canzonets." Miss Hawkins, in her Anecdotes, relates of Handel, that, being asked about his ideas and feelings when composing the Hallelujah Chorus, he replied; "I did think I did see all heaven before me, and the great God himself." He would frequently burst into tears while writing, and is said to have been found by a visitor sobbing uncontrollably when in the act of setting the words "He was despised." Shield tells us



"that his servant, who brought his coffee in the morning, often stood in silent astonishment to see his master's tears mixing in the ink as he penned his divine notes. The story of Handel repeatedly leaving his guests at the dinner-table with the exclamation, 'I have one tonight,' and repairing to another room to regale himself privately over and anon with draughts of champagne from a dozen which he had received as a present may probably be dismissed as unworthy of serious belief."

### FAÇETIE.

"On! 'Hobson!—Tommy (suddenly on his way home from church): 'What did you take out of the bag, mamma? I only got sixpence! Look here!'"

"A CRYSTAL BALL-DRAWING is named Wayborn. Nobody knows."

"When a lady faints, what figure does she need? You must bring her 2."

### PROTESTANT COW.

"Paddy Murphy and his wife, Bridget, after many years of hard labour in ditching and washing, had accumulated a sufficiency, besides supporting themselves and the 'children,' to purchase a cow, which they did at the first opportunity."

"Paddy stopped on his way home at the house of the priest, and procured a bottle of holy water, with which to exorcise the false faith out of her."

"Isn't she a fine creature?" asked Pat of the admiring Bridget. "Just build her till I fix the shed."

To save the precious fluid from harm, he took it into the house, and set it up in a cupboard until he had "fixed" things."

Then he returned and brought the bottle again, and while Bridget was holding the rope, proceeded to pour it upon her back."

But poor Paddy had made a slight mistake. Standing within the same closet was a bottle of aquafortis, that had been procured for a far different purpose, and as it dropped upon the back of the poor cow, and the hair began to smoke and the flesh burn, she exhibited decided appearances of restlessness."

"Pour on more, Paddy!" shouted Bridget, as she tugged at the rope."

"I'll give her enough now," quoth Paddy, and he emptied the bottle."

Up went the heels of the cow, down went her head, over went Bridget, and half a dozen of the "children," and away dashed the infuriated bovine down the street, to the terror of all the mothers and the delight of the dogs."

BRIGHT—The young lady who was advised to take exercise for her health, said she would run the risk and jump at an offer."

THREE hundred and thirty-seven American hotels were burned in 1875, and not a hotel clerk was as much as scorched."

### PAT AND THE PIG.

A farmer, having killed a pig, and not wishing to divide with his neighbours—as was the custom—said to his man, who by-the-way, was a son of the Emerald Isle:

"Pat, if I give the neighbours who have given to me, a piece of pork, I'll have none for myself. Can you tell me what I have to do?"

"Bedad, sir," said Pat, "it's meself that can do that same thing."

"Good," says the farmer, rubbing his hands and looking at Pat. "Now, tell me what I am to do."

"Faith, sir," said Pat, "sure, an' when the orather is dead, jist be after hanging it jist against the dore, where every mother's son of 'em will see it, an' early in the mornin', before any one is about, git up an' take in your pig an' hide it away. 'Thin, when your nabors come, jist be after tellin' them that the pig was sthloen."

"Capital idea, Pat!" exclaimed the farmer. "I'll do it, by George!"

So when the pig was hung up outside so that the neighbours might see it, the countryman anxiously awaited the approaching night, and at last retired to bed but not to sleep. Pat, under the cover of the darkness of the night, crept round the house, and stole the pig."

What was the astonishment of the farmer when, at early dawn, he arose to hide away his pig, but found no pig there, can be better imagined than described. Pat came in with his "top o' the mornin' to ye, sir," and giving him a knowing wink, said:

"Master, how about the pig?"

"Well, Pat, the pig was stolen in reality."

"Faith, and that sounds just as natural as if you had lost your pig," said Pat, with another knowing wink."

"But, you blackhead! I tell you the pig was stolen!"

"Faith an' begorra, the sorra a bite o' me thought you could act so well. Just stick to that—it's natural as life."

"By George!" roared the now irate farmer, "I tell you the pig was stolen!"

"Och, be jabbers!" said Pat, "stick to it, and your nabors will believe you, and sorra a bite of it they'll eat."

"Faith, I didn't think ye could do it so well."

A COUNTRY editor received the following: "Dear Sir,—I have looked carefully and patiently over your paper for months for the death of some individual I was acquainted with, but as yet not a single soul I care anything about has dropped off; you will please to have my name erased."

An old farmer said to his sons, "Boys, don't you ever, speake late, or wait for somethin' to turn up. You might jist as well go and sit down on a stone in the middle of a meadow and with a pale twist your legs and wait for a cow to back up to you to be milked."

THAT Baltimore man's flying machine is not an overwhelming success. Keely's motor is as quiet as the grave, Virginia has refused to take part in the Centennial, but a German chemist has obtained ferrocyanide of tetramethy-lammonium by saturating ferrocyanic acid with tetramethy-lammonium hydrate—and this is some consolation anyhow."

### FOR BABY'S SAKE.

To every home sometimes there comes

A sweet and holy hour,

When in a mother's tender arms

Lies Love's most precious flower;

When burdened lives forget their cares

And beaming faces glow;

While hearts that thrill at this new joy,

With gladness overflow,

"For darling baby's sake!"

With gentle hands we deck our walls

With pictures rich and rare;

And oull the fairest pearls to grace

The curls of sunny hair;

We rob the orchard of its bloom,

We woo the birds to sing,

And richest foliage and fruit

From sunny climes we bring,

And all for baby's sake!

The lullaby our mother sang—

As sweet as sweet could be.

We sing, and then repeat

The prayer learned at her knee;

Our tones a gentler cadence take

By parent love beguiled,

And duty grows each day more clear,

And dear each helpless child;

And all for baby's sake!

Oh! think of the darkened rooms, wherein

The cradle, empty, stands;

Where weeping mothers vainly wait

The clasp of dimpled hands!

Then garner sunshine for our homes,

Strew roses while you may,

For the joy and comfort of your lives

Is to freight each blissful day

With love for baby's sake.

L. S. N.

The following is an extract from a private letter received by the last mail from the West Coast of Africa:—"The conflict between the Ashantees and the Djuabine is at an end, most of the latter having returned to their country and their allegiance to Coomassie. The King of Ashantee is once more supreme, and probably more powerful than ever."

A capital a new approach to the Victoria Embankment, by way of Craven-street, Strand, is completed and thrown open to the public by order of the Metropolitan Board of Works. Craven Street formerly ended in a cul de sac facing the river. This has now been removed, and the roadway continued on to the Embankment at the junction of Northumberland Avenue.

A GREAT MISTAKE—Boys and men sometimes start out in life with the idea that one's success depends on sharpness and chicanery. They imagine if a man is able always to "get the best of a bargain," no matter by what deceit and meanness he carries his point, that his prosperity is assured. This is a great mistake. Enduring prosperity cannot be founded on cunning and dishonesty. The tricky and deceitful man is sure to fall a victim, sooner or later, to the influences which are for ever working against him. His house is built upon the sand, and its foundations will be certain to give way. Young people cannot

give these truths too much weight. The future of that young man is safe who eschews every phase of double-dealing and dishonesty and lays the foundation of his career in the enduring principles of everlasting truth."

### GEMS.

THERE are many fruits which never turn sweet until the frost has lain upon them. There are many ants that never fall from the boughs of the forest tree till the frost has opened and ripened them. And there are many elements of life that never grow sweet and beautiful until sorrow comes."

THERE is this difference between those two temporal blessings—health and money; money is the most coveted, but the least enjoyed; health is the most enjoyed, but the least coveted. And this superiority of the latter is still more obvious, when we reflect that the poorest among us would not part with health for money, but that the richest would gladly part with all their money for health."

WE are taught, both by religion—and that law of civilisation which we call humanity, to feel for the sorrows and distresses of our neighbours. Without the sentiment of pity, society would be little better than a menagerie of wild beasts, wherein each fought for his own hand, and no one gave thought to the sufferings or rights of others. Pity makes these wild animals into men, and substitutes for selfishness of individualism the community of race and the duty of mutual help."

### HOUSEHOLD TREASURES.

SPINACH.—Pick and wash perfectly clean two or three pounds of spinach; put it into a saucepan, with a little water, and let it boil till quite done. Turn it out in a hair sieve to drain. Throw the water away and pass the spinach through the sieve. Put a good lump of butter into a saucepan, with a pinch of flour. Mix well, add the spinach, pepper and salt to taste, and a little milk. Stir well and serve."

STEAMED RICE.—Wash the rice well; let it soak about an hour in lukewarm water; stir in a teaspoonful of salt. Set the dish in a steamer, over a kettle of boiling water, and steam one hour. Stir two or three times. Add no water after it begins to cook; but when put in the steamer, let there be as much water in the dish as will cover the rice to the depth of a quarter of an inch. If properly cooked, this rice will be light, dry, and no two kernels will stick together."

IRISH STEW.—Take a well-boned loin of mutton, and a few kidneys. But the mutton in chops, trimming the fat off. Cut the kidneys small; flour, and put in a pan with a little butter, a good quantity of sliced onion, carrot, and turnip. Fry a light brown, add water, cover closely, and stew for two hours. Have some potatoes boiled, add them to the stew, and let them simmer a little longer. You may add a little essence of celery, or port wine, or catchup. But Irish stew is essentially a plain dish and best served so."

### MISCELLANEOUS.

THE ice-dealers are complaining of a short crop; but summer hasn't come yet."

THE Queen has consented to become the patron of the triennial Musical Festival, to be held at Bristol in October, next."

THE Livingstone statue, which is to be erected in Edinburgh has been cast in bronze. It is expected to be ready for placing on its pedestal in June."

THE Dean of Westminster has, it is stated, commissioned Miss Grant to execute a bust of the late Lady Augusta Stanley, to be placed in Dunfermline Abbey."

AT a spelling bee, held recently at the Town Hall, Oxford, printers were not allowed to compete, as it was considered "other classes had not a fair chance with them."

MRS. CHRISTINE NILSSON, is staying at Rome, where her husband, now consul-general, has been sent by the faculty for the complete re-establishment of his health."

MR. CHAPLIN'S Bill for the Better Preservation of Wild fowl is a most praiseworthy one, but the time mentioned for leaving off shooting wild-ducks, and such birds is too late. The 15th of March is too late."

It is reported, on the best authority, that the Archbishop of Canterbury is about to introduce a Burial Bill into the House of Lords to meet the conscientious objections on this "burning" question of the Nonconformists. His Grace, by his procedure, will also meet the views of moderate Churchmen."

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## NOTICES TO CORRESPONDENTS.

**JERSEY.**—The words "warm" and "hot" do not express the same meaning, the former expressing only a moderate degree of heat and the latter a great degree.

**S. S. H.**—A "keeper" is a ring generally worn next to the wedding-ring; as if it were intended to prevent the latter from slipping off the finger. The engagement-ring is usually worn on the same finger which is subsequently to wear the wedding-ring.

**A. Y. M.**—You are making a mountain out of a mole-hill. Propose to the young lady at once and learn your fate. If all that you say be true she may reject you, but the sooner you bring the case to an issue the better your chance of success will probably be.

**JANE P.**—You should certainly accept the apology offered by your young female friend under the circumstances. She did not know of your engagement to the gentleman at the time she joked with you upon the subject, and, after all, the jest was a trivial one.

**E. M.**—You cannot obtain any redress. It is one of those unfortunate cases in which a wife must either put up with her husband's bad conduct or else leave him and shift for herself. But if you thus leave him of your own accord you cannot compel him to allow you a separate maintenance.

**C. R.**—We frequently receive requests to give advice by private letter. It is impossible for us to comply with them. Sometimes people offer us money as an inducement for us to reply. Our compensation is solely in our circulation and in the hope that we promote the happiness and welfare of our readers, and this is sufficient and ample.

**HORACE.**—It is useless for you to try to make out an excuse for a child's disobedience to its parents. The rule is imperative that children must obey. It is right that they should obey. All laws, divine and human, prescribe filial obedience. So stop entangling yourself in the web of sophistry which you have woven and practise a cheerful obedience to your parents.

**C. H.**—On receiving wedding or mourning cards it is not the fashion to write letters of either congratulation or condolence. In the former case you will receive the "at home" cards in due course, when you should call on the bride. In the latter case you should call and leave your card a few days after you think the funeral must have taken place.

**G. B.**—If you have lost the ring which the young lady gave you in exchange for one that you presented to her, tell her so. Of course you cannot return it. You must be your own judge as to the cause of her casting you off. It may be that she is only trying your temper and constancy. Girls in love are full of freaks sometimes, and do queer things without meaning any harm, at least so people say who pretend to know all about them.

**Y. C.**—Man has been styled a speaking animal, a laughing animal, a bargaining animal and a drunken animal, in contradistinction to all other animals, who neither speak, nor laugh, nor bargain, nor get drunk, but a cooking animal seems, after all, his most characteristic and distinguishing appellation. In the important art of cooking victuals he shines pre-eminent; here he taxes all his faculties, racks his invention and gives unbounded range to his imagination. Nature has given to every other animal a peculiar taste and furnished three or four kinds of food to suit the taste, but this sense in man accommodates itself to an innumerable quantity of materials.

**JUNO.**—We do not know that a lady deserves any credit for personal beauty, but she will be pretty certain to obtain credit and admiration both for it and on account of it. It is all very well for moralists to argue that beauty is only skin-deep, that it is fleeting, that it is a mere accident, that it is no indication of moral, mental or spiritual worth, and all that, but the fact remains: that beauty is power. It is true that when a beautiful woman is discovered to be ignorant or bad-tempered, or low-minded, anything else that is repulsive, the shock is greater than it would have been if she had been homely, but nevertheless, at first beauty will, in most cases, carry the day against all competitors, and when it happens to be united with great accomplishments and moral worth, it becomes irresistible. Therefore, despise not beauty, but fortify it by every possible excellence.

**SIBILLA.**—Your lover seems to have exaggerated the importance of your visit to the fortune-teller along with your young female companions. It is a foolish thing for any one to visit such charlatans for a serious purpose, believing in their ability to reveal the future, and when young people or old people visit them merely in

sport they choose a rather dubious method of amusement. Still, girls and boys "will have their fun," and when they happen, through inadvertence or otherwise, to commit an innocent indiscretion, it is a very ungracious thing for anybody, and especially for a lover, to make an extravagant fuss about it and conduct himself like a bear. Now that you have found out what a Turk he is and he has given you a good and sufficient reason for breaking off your engagement with him, you should act with the greatest possible judgment and circumspection, inasmuch as the happiness or misery of your whole future life will depend upon the course you may now determine upon.

**H. H.**—A servant cannot compel a master or mistress to give any character at all, but if a bad one be given and it is not deserved an action may be brought by the servant for defamation. Masters and mistresses should always deal as generously and likewise as leniently as possible in respect to servants' characters, for on character does the bread, and therefore the very existence, of that class of people depend. Many a poor girl has been driven to wrong-doing by the harsh and uncalled-for refusal of a master to give her a character on leaving, and many an unfortunate being has thus been driven to suicide. Those who employ servants should therefore reflect that it is no light thing to turn away their domestics without character, when the refusal is the result of a vindictiveness that had better been softened down by some feeling of a more Christian character.

## YOU MUSTN'T STAY SO LATE!

The clock was loudly chiming  
Upon the mantel shelf,  
While Love was gently rhyming  
A song to please himself.  
It broke upon the silence,  
The oracle of fate,  
While some one softly whispered,  
"You mustn't stay so late!"

In vain the warning finger,  
In vain the silver chime,  
Where we're disposed to linger,  
"We take no note of time."  
And so I kept on talking  
Unto my charming Kate,  
Despite her admonition,  
"You mustn't stay so late!"

Detaining by her glances  
Affectionately bright,  
Though morning's swift advances,  
How can I say good-night?  
And though I would not grieve her,  
Nor enmity create,  
I seldom heed her chiding,  
"You mustn't stay so late!"

'Tis Kate I mean to marry,  
Despite her chiding "no,"  
And so I'm free to tarry  
Whenever she bids me go.  
For should I be submissive,  
She'd quickly change her tone,  
And say, "You do not love me!"  
"What makes you go so soon?" J. P.

**T. W.**, seventeen, medium height, affectionate, fond of home, domesticated, would like to correspond with a young gentleman about twenty, with a view to matrimony.

**OSCAR**, twenty, tall, fair complexion, hazel eyes, wishes to correspond with a respectable young man with a view to matrimony.

**OWEN**, medium height, considered good looking, dark hair, fresh complexion, would like to correspond with a young lady.

**ROSE**, eighteen, dark hair and eyes, would like to correspond with a good looking young man with a view to matrimony.

**WILLIAM**, twenty-seven, medium height, good looking, dark complexion, wishes to correspond with a respectable young lady about eighteen with a view to matrimony.

**H. W.**, eighteen, medium height, good looking, fond of home, wishes to correspond with a young man with a view to matrimony.

**ADENA**, nineteen, good looking, brown hair, dark eyes, wishes to correspond with a young man about twenty-one.

**A. H.**, medium height, fond of home, wishes to correspond with a young lady.

**INGOMAR**, seventeen, dark hair and eyes, would like to correspond with a young man of a loving disposition and fond of home; a little money preferred.

**M. W. M.**, seventeen, medium height, fair complexion, wishes to correspond with a young man; respondent must have some money.

**R. S.**, twenty, dark, good looking, good tempered and domesticated, would like to correspond with a nice looking young gentleman in a good position, with a view to matrimony.

**LOVING LOUIS**, eighteen, dark hair, dark gray eyes, fair complexion, pleasing manners, considered very good looking, would like to correspond with a fair young man of medium height, with a view to matrimony.

**CONSTANT JASPER**, twenty-three, medium height, light brown hair, hazel eyes, affectionate disposition, thoroughly domesticated, would like to correspond with a tall, fair young man of gentlemanly appearance; respondent must have a loving disposition; position not the chief consideration.

**VILLAGE BRAUT**, eighteen, medium height, fair complexion, blue eyes, light brown hair, loving disposition, would like to correspond with a tall, dark young man, not particular to age.

**LIL**, twenty-one, tall, dark hair, brown eyes and very domesticated, wishes to correspond with a fair young gentleman.

**THOMAS W.**, medium height, light complexion, considered good looking, has a good business of his own, wishes to correspond with a young lady about twenty; respondent must be dark, tall and well made.

**DICK**, twenty-three, tall, handsome, well educated,

good connexions and in good position, would like to correspond with a young lady with a view to matrimony; respondent must be educated and fond of home.

**SAUCY ALICE** and **DOMESTICATED NELLY** would like to correspond with two young men with a view to matrimony. **Saucy Alice** is twenty-one, fair, considered good looking. **Domesticated Nelly** is twenty-six, medium height, brown hair, dark eyes, good pianist, and would make a thrifty housewife; respondent must be medium height, dark, of a loving disposition and fond of home; a mechanic preferred.

**MAGGIE** and **JANE**, two companions, wish to correspond with two respectable young men with a view to matrimony. **Jane** is twenty, rather short, dark, considered good looking, thoroughly domesticated. **Maggie** is tall, nineteen, considered good looking, loving disposition, would make a dutiful wife.

**HARRY V.**, nineteen, rather tall, light complexion, considered good looking, wishes to correspond with a good looking and amiable young lady about seventeen or eighteen, who has some small means and could make home happy.

**N.**, nineteen, tall, fair complexion, considered very pretty, would like to correspond with a tall, dark, good looking gentleman.

**KATE J.**, under thirty, tall, fair, considered handsome, has more than enough for one, but would like respondent to bring an increase of income equal to the probable increase of expenditure, though this is not indispensable, wishes to correspond with a good looking young lady; respondent must be handsome, well educated, tasteful and not above twenty-five.

## COMMUNICATIONS RECEIVED:

**DAISY** is responded to by—**Zouave**, nineteen, medium height.

**FORGETMEAN** by—**Minnie**, twenty, tall, thoroughly domesticated.

**W. S.** and **J. B. T.** by **Violet** and **Daisy**.

**M. T.** by—**Polite**, twenty-one, very respectable, would make a loving wife.

**WILHELM** by—**M. A. B.**, domesticated, fond of home, and would make a loving wife.

**MARY** by—**Valentine**.

**MERRA** by—**May**, twenty-one, a tradesman's daughter, medium height, lively disposition, domesticated, fond of home, and thinks she is all he requires.

**GIRTY QUEEN** by—**J.**, twenty-one, tall, fair complexion, considered good looking.

**HENRY** by—**A. A.**, a clerk in a very good position, medium height, dark complexion, musical and fond of home.

**ADENA** by—**Delta**, a young gentleman in a good position, rather short, dark hair and eyes, very quiet and homey.

**J. A. P.** by—**W. K.**, twenty-seven, medium height, dark complexion.

**R. S.** by—**Lily**, medium height, fair, good tempered, considered good looking.

**M. B.** by—**Meenie**, seventeen, dark hair and blue eyes, passionately fond of dancing and music and a good performer on the piano.

**MARGUERITE** and **BLANCHET** by—**Edgar** and **Charles**. **Edgar** is twenty-three, medium height, dark complexion, good musician, and moving in good position. **Charles** is nineteen, medium height, light complexion, a good musician, in good society, will have an income when of age.

**M. A.** by—**F. M. J.**, twenty-eight, thoroughly domesticated, has had great experience with children, and thinks she is all he requires.

**BEATRICE** by—**H. A.**, twenty-two, medium height, loving disposition, dark complexion, good prospects.

**EMILIE** by—**W. J.**, twenty-one, tall, dark hair, a native of Liverpool, good looking, who thinks she is all he requires.

**S. G.** by—**G. E.**, twenty-one, gray eyes, fair, medium height.

**JOS** by—**Matthew S.**, medium height, dark, considered good looking.

**SAM** and **W. T. W.** by—**Annie** and **Sarah**, two companions, both twenty.

**SYDNEY** and **BARONER** by—**Bessie** and **Nell**, both under twenty-one, thoroughly domesticated, fond of home, considered good looking, medium height, both rather dark.

**T. W.** by—**Maud**, eighteen, amiable, a dressmaker by profession, who thinks she is all he requires.

**MARY** by—**Medicus**, a medical student, twenty-two, tall and fair, loving disposition, has a private income and good expectations.

**MADONNA** by—**F. D.**, seaman in the Royal Navy, twenty, rather dark, medium height, of a loving disposition.

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